United Nations A/68/878–S/2014/339

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
15 May 2014

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 65
Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Children and armed conflict

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, which covers the period from January to December 2013, is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2068 (2012), by which the Council requested me to continue to submit annual reports on the implementation of its resolutions and presidential statements on children and armed conflict.

2. The report highlights global trends regarding the impact of armed conflict on children in 2013 and the main activities and initiatives with regard to the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions and the conclusions of its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. In follow-up to the previous report (A/67/845-S/2013/245), it provides an update on the cooperation among partners to the children and armed conflict agenda, including within the United Nations system.

3. In line with the resolutions of the Security Council on children and armed conflict, the present report includes in its annexes a list of parties that engage in the recruitment and use of children, sexual violence against children, the killing and maiming of children, recurrent attacks on schools and/or hospitals and recurrent attacks or threats of attacks against protected personnel, in contravention of international law.

4. All information presented in this report has been documented, vetted, and verified for accuracy by the United Nations. In situations where the ability to obtain or independently verify information is hampered by factors such as insecurity or access restrictions, it is qualified as such. The preparation of the report involved broad consultations within the United Nations, at Headquarters and in the field, and with relevant Member States.

5. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), and in identifying situations that fall within the scope of her mandate, my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict is guided by the criteria found in international

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humanitarian law and international jurisprudence for determining the existence of an armed conflict. In the implementation of her mandate, my Special Representative has adopted a pragmatic and cooperative approach on the issue, with an emphasis on humanitarian principles, aimed at ensuring broad and effective protection for children affected by conflict in situations of concern. Reference to a situation is not a legal determination, and reference to a non-State party does not affect its legal status.

II. The impact of armed conflict on children

Trends and developments

6. Armed conflict continued to have a disproportionate impact on children. Indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas or attacks directly targeting civilians, through explosive weapons, air strikes or the use of terror tactics, took a worrisome toll on children. In 2013, the United Nations observed a significant spike in the killing and maiming of children in several situations, including in Afghanistan and Iraq.

7. The reporting period witnessed a deepening of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, where intensifying hostilities led to widespread grave violations against children and a worsening humanitarian crisis. In the Central African Republic, the recruitment and use of children became endemic throughout 2013 and increased with the surge in violence that has plagued the country since mid-September. With the resumption of conflict in South Sudan, pro-Government and opposition forces reportedly used children on a large scale and committed other grave violations.

8. The situation in northern Nigeria became of grave concern. While the humanitarian situation affecting at least half of the population living in north-eastern Nigeria remained critical, the extremist group known as Boko Haram intensified attacks on schools, resulting in the killing and maiming of children and other grave violations.

9. The recruitment and use of children in conflict remained prevalent. More than 4,000 cases were documented by the United Nations in 2013, but thousands more children are estimated to have been recruited and used. Impunity for grave violations against children, in particular sexual violence, is common to several situations and exacerbates even further the vulnerability of children. The detention of children for alleged association with armed groups or on security charges, highlighted as a concern in my previous annual report, continued in 17 of the 23 situations considered in the present report.

10. These and other worrisome trends during the reporting period call for a redoubling of efforts to better implement available tools to address the plight of children affected by armed conflict. Concrete and pragmatic measures must lead the way. The United Nations, and in particular my Special Representative, have sent a strong message in 2013 that efforts are being made to step up to the challenge.

"Children, Not Soldiers"

11. On 6 March 2014, my Special Representative and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched the United Nations global campaign entitled "Children, Not Soldiers" to end the recruitment and use of children by Government security forces in conflict by the end of 2016. On 7 March, the Security Council endorsed the campaign's objectives in its resolution 2143 (2014).

12. The campaign will be implemented in close cooperation with the eight Governments listed in the annexes to the present report for recruitment and use of children, all of which have signed or committed to an action plan and endorsed the campaign. The campaign aims at expediting the implementation of commitments to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children through the development of road maps identifying gaps and outstanding measures to be adopted by the Governments concerned, with the support of the United Nations and partners. Progress will be assessed against regular, joint reviews by the United Nations and Governments concerned.

13. Enhanced coordination between the United Nations country task forces and Governments concerned ensures that road maps identify remaining gaps and set priority activities, benchmarks and detailed deadlines. Such efforts will allow for expedited, yet context-specific and sustainable implementation of action plans. A clear sequencing of activities and measures provides the basis for step-by-step compliance assessments, reflecting the remaining challenges identified by both signatories to action plans, thus ensuring a structured path to delisting for all parties concerned. In that regard, the establishment of interministerial committees, facilitating an all-inclusive government approach, is critical. I note with satisfaction that the existing tools incorporated into this campaign, at this initial stage, have already yielded results. For example, in Chad, through the joint efforts of the Government and the United Nations system, 2013 marked a year of positive progress. Since May 2013, based on a mutually agreed set of priority measures, the Government and military authorities have intensified their efforts to reach compliance with the engagements undertaken in the action plan signed with the United Nations in 2011.

Engaging armed groups

14. As I emphasized in my message for the launch of the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign, the ultimate goal is to ensure that no child is associated with parties to conflict — ever, anywhere. In that regard, it is important to note that the campaign, while focusing on State actors, does not diminish the attention paid to non-State actors. On the contrary, as described in the present report, and despite the ongoing challenges in respect of access to and dialogue with non-State armed groups to end grave violations against children, the number of public statements and command orders issued by armed groups prohibiting the recruitment and use of children has increased. That trend was observed in nine situations described in the report and provides a basis for building momentum to address grave violations against children by armed groups.

15. Fifty-one armed groups are included in the lists annexed to the present report. Those parties are very diverse in nature and require different strategies of

engagement, and the implementation of child protection commitments may vary considerably. Advocacy strategies require the identification of specific incentives based on the military structure, size, modus operandi and other characteristics of armed groups. Taking those aspects into account, concrete commitments are then identified by the United Nations and translated into activities and measures with the armed group concerned, culminating in an action plan agreed on by both signatories.

16. Entry points for initial contact are chosen strategically in close cooperation with all pertinent actors in a given situation. Peace processes, for example, have provided strategic opportunities to reach armed groups that have already showed a willingness to discuss political commitments. It is also crucial to mainstream the children and armed conflict agenda into other forms and venues of engagement with armed groups. Sensitization on the consequences of the military use of schools may lead to a dialogue on how to end the use of children and the use of schools.

17. The Arms Trade Treaty adopted by the General Assembly in April 2013 is a significant new instrument. Keeping armed groups from acquiring arms and ammunition contributes to the protection of children in conflict situations.

Protecting education and health care in conflict

18. Attacks on schools and hospitals are a common feature in the majority of situations covered in the present report. I welcome the guidance note on Security Council resolution 1998 (2011) issued jointly by my Special Representative, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. Its timeliness was further underlined by Security Council resolution 2143 (2014), in which the Council reiterated its concern regarding attacks on schools and hospitals and requested enhanced monitoring of the military use of schools. That practice, which deprives children of their basic right to access to education and puts them at risk, was documented in 15 of 23 situations.

19. The guidance note provides conceptual clarity and technical advice, including advocacy tools and an action plan template to end and prevent attacks on schools and hospitals and protected personnel, as well as an operational strategy to deter the use of schools. Therefore, it is not only a crucial tool for United Nations child protection, education and health practitioners on the ground. It may also serve Member States, regional and subregional organizations, or other pertinent actors as guidance for advocacy with third parties, or may serve to develop additional binding measures to better prevent attacks on schools and hospitals and to deter the military use of schools in accordance with international law in that regard. As for other child protection concerns, the protection of schools and hospitals should be introduced in military planning and operating procedures at all times. Creating awareness and mainstreaming at peacetime — setting in motion a cultural change — is crucial to preventing violations in times of conflict.

Mainstreaming of the children and armed conflict agenda

20. I welcome the continued support and attention of the Security Council to the children and armed conflict agenda in its thematic resolutions. I commend the Council for mainstreaming that agenda in many of its country-specific and thematic resolutions. It is also thanks to the Council's initiative that the plight of children in

conflict is better recognized today than ever before. Cooperation among United Nations entities as well as with other partners from diverse thematic backgrounds continues to be strengthened, for example, through the above-mentioned guidance note on resolution 1998 (2011), as does the expertise of actors working for the well-being and protection of children. In view of the latter, I welcome the Council's appraisal of the importance of training, in particular in view of the predeployment child protection training for peacekeepers launched on 8 April 2014 by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and the strengthening of the child protection adviser capacity.

21. The present report could not have been produced without the Council's groundbreaking resolutions on children and armed conflict. In that regard, my "Rights up front" initiative, which ensures that the mandated human rights responsibilities of the Organization are fully integrated across its peace and security work, also supports strengthened action on grave violations against children.

22. The United Nations continued to work with regional and subregional organizations in the light of their increasing role in mediation, peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding missions, as well as in the development of child protection standards and best practices. On 17 September 2013, my Special Representative signed a declaration of intent with the Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission, which is being implemented in partnership with UNICEF. Through the expert advice of a child protection specialist, the Peace and Security Department, with the support of the Office of my Special Representative and UNICEF, is working to develop guidance and mainstream child protection in the policies and activities of the African Union. I also welcome the continued role of the European Union in addressing the impact of armed conflict on children, including its outspoken support for and advocacy of the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign. The Office of my Special Representative continued to work with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with regard to the mainstreaming of child protection standards among the forces of its member States.

III. Information on grave violations committed against children during armed conflict and progress made by parties on dialogue, action plans and other measures to halt and prevent violations against children

A. Situations on the agenda of the Security Council

Afghanistan

23. Although the recruitment and use of children remained underreported owing to security constraints, the United Nations documented the recruitment and use of 97 children (all boys), as young as eight years of age. The majority of the children (72) were reportedly recruited and used by armed opposition groups, including the Taliban and the Haqqani Network. Nine of the children were recruited to conduct suicide attacks. In one incident, in May 2013, a 15-year-old boy conducted a suicide attack against an Afghan Local Police commander in Muqur district, Gazhni Province, killing three local police officers and two civilians, and injuring 16 civilians. Children were also recruited to manufacture and plant improvised

explosive devices, as combatants and for other roles, including as sex slaves. In one particular case in Laghman Province, State authorities arrested 21 children, as young as seven years of age, allegedly on their way to Pakistan for suicide attack training by the Taliban. The Taliban rejected the allegations. According to the Government, all the children were released and reunited with their families. The recruitment and use of 25 children was attributed to the Afghan national security forces, including 14 by the local police, 5 by the national police and 1 by the Afghan national army. For example, a 12-year-old boy was killed when national police elements forced him to check a suspicious looking object. One boy associated with the Afghan national army in Kunar Province was used as a porter and was injured by an improvised explosive device. In a positive trend, child protection units within national police recruitment centres in the western region rejected 132 boys from voluntary enlistment.

24. According to the Ministry of Justice, 196 boys were held in juvenile rehabilitation centres across the country on national security-related charges, including for alleged association with armed opposition groups as of December 2013. The United Nations remained concerned regarding several reports of alleged ill-treatment and sexual abuse of child detainees. On 31 July 2013, the United Nations was granted access to the Parwan Detention Facility to meet with 2 of the 70 boys who had been arrested by international military forces between December 2009 and May 2013 and had been detained in the facility under the authority of the Government of Afghanistan at the time of the visit. Most of the children are believed to be in detention without charges and without the opportunity to have access to a court to assess the lawfulness of their detention.

25. At least 545 children were killed and 1,149 injured in 790 documented incidents. Child casualties increased by 30 per cent in 2013 compared with 2012. Armed opposition groups, including the Taliban and Hezb-e-Islami, were responsible for a majority (889) of the recorded child casualties. The use of improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks, including by boys in at least two instances, resulted in the killing of 229 children and in injury to 396 others. On 17 May, for example, two improvised explosive devices were detonated in Kandahar city, killing a six-year-old boy and injuring 18 boys and a girl, as young as four. Pro-Government forces, including international military forces, were responsible for the killing of at least 81 children and injury to 125 others, mainly resulting from clashes with armed groups. At least 120 of those casualties were caused by Afghan national security forces, which, as part of the handover and transition of security responsibilities to Afghan forces, has taken the lead in all operations since 18 June. Thirty-seven children were killed and 19 others were injured in international military air strikes. In addition, clashes between pro-Government forces and armed groups resulted in 167 children killed and 432 injured, including by gun shots and artillery and mortar shelling, for which it was not possible to verify a perpetrator. Some incidents were acknowledged by international security forces. Finally, civilian casualties resulting from drone strikes increased from 16 in 2012 to 59 in 2013, including the killing of 2 children. For example, on 27 November, in Mohammad Aqa district, Logar Province, a 10-year-old boy was killed in a reported drone strike on the premises of Shahid Ghulam Sakhi High School.

26. Twelve incidents of sexual violence against 11 boys and five girls were verified during the reporting period, including by the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and the national police. Sexual violence against children remains a feature of the

conflict but continues to be underreported owing to a climate of impunity as well as fear of reprisals and stigmatization. At least 15 boys detained by Afghan national security forces on national security-related charges claimed to having been raped or received threats of sexual violence upon arrest or in detention. Several reports on the sexual abuse of boys by Taliban and Haqqani Network commanders were also received, including from a 16-year-old boy formerly associated with the Haqqani Network and arrested by the national police in December 2013. The practice of *bacha-bazi*, the use of boys as sex slaves by men in positions of power, remained a serious concern. The Government stated that any act of sexual violence against children by elements of the Afghan national security forces was subject to criminal investigation, and an educational programme to prevent the practice of *bacha-bazi* was prepared in 2013 with the assistance of the national police.

27. Schools continued to be attacked by parties to conflict or indirectly damaged in clashes. In at least 73 incidents, schools were attacked, resulting in the killing of at least 11 children and in injury to 46 others. In some incidents, improvised explosive devices were planted inside school premises by armed opposition groups. Schools were also damaged by nearby suicide and improvised explosive device attacks targeting public areas or Government and international military forces, resulting in the killing of children. The Taliban also continued to issue threats against girls' schools and other schools. For instance, in May 2013, local Taliban members in Nangarhar Province, issued a letter in which they threatened teachers and children at a girls' school with acid attacks if they continued to attend school. Also in May, in Zabul Province, the Taliban forced the closure of 40 schools in retaliation for Government action against the groups. At least 13 teachers were killed or injured in 2013 and eight teachers were abducted by armed opposition groups.

28. According to the Afghan Ministry of Education, approximately 115,000 children were affected by the temporary or permanent closure of 539 schools owing to the security situation in the southern (482 cases), south-eastern (39) and western (18) regions. In addition, the military use of schools by the Afghan national security forces continued to put children at risk of attacks by armed groups and affect their access to education in at least 15 documented incidents. For example, in October, in Warduj district of Badakhshan Province, the Afghan national security forces temporarily closed down three schools for use as forward bases and installed artillery on the roofs. The Government states that orders have been disseminated to all Afghan national security forces units to refrain from using schools or health clinics as bases.

29. Incidents affecting access by children to health care included damage to health-care facilities, the placement of improvised explosive devices within the premises of clinics and hospitals, and forced entry into and looting of health-care facilities. In addition, at least 39 health-care personnel were killed or injured, abducted or intimidated. All the incidents were attributed to armed opposition groups, except one incident of forced entry into a health-care facility and its temporary use by international military forces and two incidents involving the intimidation of health-care personnel and forced entry by Afghan national security forces. The remaining incidents were attributed to armed opposition groups, including the Taliban. Although the Taliban publicly supported polio vaccination efforts in 2013, local factions in several provinces continued to restrict access for vaccination campaigns.

30. At least 30 children were abducted in 17 verified incidents, including 16 attributed to the Taliban and other armed opposition groups. Children were abducted for their alleged involvement in spying on behalf of the Government or international forces, for recruitment, sexual abuse and as reprisal against family members working or allegedly supporting the Government or international forces. At least 10 boys abducted by the Taliban were executed, including 2 who were abducted on 23 May for alleged spying for the Afghan national security forces in Bati Kot district of Nangarhar Province, as stated in a letter issued by the Taliban. Both boys were tortured before they were killed. On 19 October, in Bala Buluk district, Farah Province, in the only documented incident perpetrated by the local police, four boys were summarily executed after being abducted and blamed for planting improvised explosive devices for armed opposition groups.

31. At least 83 humanitarian staff were abducted and 35 were killed or injured by armed opposition groups during the reporting period. Humanitarian access was also affected by at least 23 incidents of attacks on or looting of humanitarian convoys and facilities of humanitarian agencies.

32. I welcome the progress made regarding compliance with the action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children, including owing to the unimpeded access granted to the United Nations for screening purposes and the continuing build-up of child protection units within national and local police recruitment centres. I encourage the Government of Afghanistan to redouble its efforts and expedite the implementation of the action plan in line with the 15-point "road map towards compliance", drafted in August 2013 with the United Nations and the assistance of the Office of my Special Representative. I note that the Government submitted its third progress report in March 2014, in which it detailed the steps taken towards the implementation of the action plan, and that international organizations have offered to assist the Government in its obligations in that regard.

Central African Republic

33. Throughout 2013, the human rights situation worsened dramatically, with a multiplication and shifting of alliances of armed groups: on the one hand, the Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP), the CPJP fondamentale, the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC) and the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR), which came to form, or were associated in varying degrees with, the Séléka coalition; and the anti-Balaka, a local defence militia, which emerged in the second half of the year in response to the systematic attacks against the civilian population by the ex-Séléka coalition. Starting in December 2012, the Séléka coalition advanced towards Bangui, seizing the capital on 24 March 2013 and ousting President François Bozizé. Michel Djotodia, one of Séléka's leaders, declared himself the new Head of State.

34. On 13 September, Michel Djotodia dismantled the Séléka[1] by presidential decree. However, widespread abuses continued to be perpetrated between September and December 2013 by ex-Séléka units that refused to disband and continued to engage in systematic killings, rape and torture, and the looting and destruction of villages.

[1] Reference will be made to Séléka when the incidents took place prior to the dismantlement (January to September) and ex-Séléka when incidents occurred after September.

35. In response to the systematic exactions and attacks against civilians by the ex-Séléka between September and November 2013, the anti-Balaka became increasingly organized in different parts of the country. In some cases, the militias were associated with elements of the former Central African Armed Forces. Tensions between the Muslim and Christian communities were exacerbated by increasing clashes between the ex-Séléka and the anti-Balaka.

36. On 5 December, anti-Balaka elements launched a coordinated attack against ex-Séléka positions in Bangui, which triggered a wave of violence with grave violations being committed by both sides.

37. Access by the United Nations remained severely restricted throughout 2013, significantly disrupting the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children. Documented cases of grave violations are only indicative, therefore, of the actual scale of violations that has occurred.

38. Both the anti-Balaka and the Séléka coalition, prior and after its dismantlement, systematically recruited and used children. The United Nations documented the recruitment and use of 171 boys and 17 girls, and estimates that several thousand children have been and remain associated with the ex-Séléka and the anti-Balaka. The progressive deterioration of the security environment also led to the re-recruitment of children. For example, on 1 April, 41 children (36 boys and 5 girls), separated from CPJP in August 2012, were re-recruited by Séléka elements in the north-eastern towns of Ndélé and Bria from a Transit and Orientation Centre. In December, five boys previously separated from the ex-Séléka were re-recruited by the anti-Balaka in Bangui.

39. Hundreds of children are estimated to have been killed or maimed by machetes, firearms and other weaponry. The United Nations verified the killing of 27 children and the maiming of 115 others. Most documented incidents occurred in the context of the unconstitutional change of power on 24 March 2013 and the December attacks by the anti-Balaka on ex-Séléka positions in Bangui. The latter resulted in the death of an estimated 1,000 civilians, including many children.

40. While the majority of the children were killed or maimed in the context of clashes between the ex-Séléka and the anti-Balaka, targeted attacks against children were also documented. In two separate incidents, in December 2013 and early January 2014, six boys were beheaded by Muslim civilians in retaliation for attacks by the anti-Balaka. On 2 December, 10 children were wounded in an anti-Balaka attack against civilians in the town of Boali. In early 2014, grave violations continued to be committed by both sides.

41. The United Nations has documented sexual violence against 20 girls, mainly by the Séléka. For instance, on 29 July, an 11-year-old girl was raped by a Séléka combatant in the town of Bossangoa. Weak monitoring capacity, fear of stigmatization and a climate of impunity continue to heavily affect reporting on sexual violence. Nonetheless, credible reports suggest that sexual violence by Séléka combatants was part of a larger pattern of systematic violations committed against civilians in areas under their control throughout 2013.

42. At least 36 schools and five hospitals were attacked by ex-Séléka. For example, on 24 August, the Séléka burned down a school in Nana Gribizi Province after school authorities refused to hand over their archives. On 5 December, ex-Séléka combatants attacked the "Hôpital de l'amitié" in Bangui and summarily

executed 10 patients. The hospital remained closed until 4 January 2014 and after security provisions by the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) were put in place. In addition, at least 20 schools were reportedly used as bases and barracks by the ex-Séléka throughout the Central African Republic. Many schools remained closed throughout the Central African Republic, after having been looted or used by armed groups, damaged by shelling or destroyed by fire, causing a heavy impact on the right of children to education. A group of anti-Balaka and former elements of the national armed forces were observed using a school in Bangui following the 5 December attacks. The ex-Séléka also used and looted health facilities in at least seven documented cases. For example, from July to September, a Séléka unit established its base at the Ouandago health-care centre in Nana Gribizi before leaving the centre as a result of humanitarian advocacy efforts.

43. Owing to the security situation, humanitarian access was limited in large areas of the Central African Republic. The United Nations documented specific cases of denial of humanitarian access by the national armed forces in two incidents and by the ex-Séléka in 22 incidents. For example, in February, the national armed forces prevented international humanitarian non-governmental organizations from leaving Bangui because of their alleged support of the Séléka. On 11 February 2013, the Séléka prevented a United Nations plane from landing in Bria, preventing the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The compounds of many international non-governmental organizations were looted throughout the year.

44. On 26 November, the Ministry of Defence granted the United Nations unconditional screening access to military barracks and cantonment sites in view of the separation and reintegration of children associated with armed groups. The transitional authorities reiterated such commitments following a visit by my Special Representative in December. A total of 149 children were separated from the ex-Séléka. The fluid command structure of the anti-Balaka, among other challenges, was an obstacle to opening a structured dialogue. The United Nations continued to engage with international forces, including Operation Sangaris and MISCA, on the development of standard operating procedures for the separation and referral of children associated with armed groups. In early 2014, a national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategy was under revision by the transitional Government. At the time of reporting, the United Nations was working closely with the transitional authorities in that regard to ensure that the national strategy included adequate provisions on the release and reintegration of children.

45. The abominable atrocities committed against children by armed groups and in the context of the ongoing violence must stop and perpetrators must be held accountable. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing humanitarian crisis and the continued climate of lawlessness and impunity. In view of the re-establishment of national security forces, the ongoing disarmament of the ex-Séléka and the anti-Balaka must be accompanied by a thorough investigation of operational and political chains of command responsible for grave violations against children.

Chad

46. The deployment of Chadian troops to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) prompted renewed momentum to accelerate the implementation of the action plan signed in June 2011 to end and prevent under-age

recruitment in the Armée nationale tchadienne. My Special Representative, jointly with UNICEF, visited Chad in May 2013. On that occasion, the Chadian authorities renewed their commitment to engage constructively with the United Nations to expedite the implementation of the action plan, appointed a high-level focal point in that regard and adopted a road map detailing 10 specific and time-bound measures to be implemented in the short and long term to achieve compliance with the action plan.

47. Since then, the Government of Chad, in cooperation with the United Nations and other partners, has taken significant steps to fulfil its obligations. A central child protection unit in the Ministry of Defence and one in each of the eight "defence and security zones" were established to coordinate the monitoring and protection of children's rights and to implement awareness-raising activities. Between August and October 2013, the Government and the United Nations jointly conducted screening and age verification of approximately 3,800 troops of the armée nationale tchadienne in all eight zones. Age verification standards had been previously developed during a workshop organized by the United Nations in July. In addition, between August and September 2013, a training-the-trainers programme on child protection was attended by 346 members of the armée nationale tchadienne. A child protection training module to be integrated in the curricula of the police and gendarmerie and of the senior military school in N'Djamena was under development at the time of reporting.

48. Since July 2013, troops of the armée nationale tchadienne to be deployed in Mali started to receive predeployment training on child protection and international humanitarian law, including 864 troops of the armée nationale tchadienne attending child protection training at the Loumia training centre in December. The United Nations stands ready to support further training initiatives for the troops, including the systematic training of troops for international peacekeeping operations.

49. In October 2013, a presidential directive was adopted to confirm 18 years as the minimum age for recruitment into the armed and security forces. It also established age verification procedures and instructed that "penal and disciplinary sanctions" would be taken against those violating the orders. The directive was disseminated among the commanders of all eight "defence and security zones", including in the context of several training and verification missions. On 4 February 2014, the recruitment and use of children was explicitly criminalized through the adoption of a presidential decree. I encourage the National Assembly to expedite the consideration and adoption of the Child Protection Code, which will further strengthen the protection of children in Chad. Finally, following the adoption in May 2013 of the Law on the Organization of the Civil Registry, the United Nations, in collaboration with the Government, undertook the late registration of 100,000 births in N'Djamena and is developing a two-year strategy for capacity-building in civil registration.

50. While the efforts made by the Government to meet all obligations under the action plan resulted in significant progress, a number of challenges remained to ensure sustainability and the effective prevention of violations against children. Chad should pursue comprehensive and thorough screening and training of its armed and security forces to continue to prevent the presence of children, including in the light of Chad's growing involvement in peacekeeping operations. While no new cases of recruitment of children were documented by the United Nations in

2013 and no children were found during the joint screening exercises, interviews confirmed that soldiers had been integrated in the past into the armée nationale tchadienne from armed groups while still under the age of 18. Moreover, the strengthening of operating procedures, such as those for age verification, which ensure the accountability of perpetrators, and free and accessible birth registration, should remain a priority for the Chadian authorities.

51. The security situation in neighbouring countries continued to affect children in Chad. At the time of reporting, the crisis in the Central African Republic, border porosity and weak State authority in the country had resulted in the inflow of approximately 80,000 refugees, including unaccompanied children into Chad. In May 2013, the United Nations received allegations of cross-border recruitment of Chadian children by the Séléka. A significant number of children associated with the ex-Séléka were reportedly crossing the border into the Central African Republic in Tissi area. In June, five Chadian children separated from the Séléka were re-recruited from a transit centre in Bangui, where they awaited repatriation to Chad and family reunification. In addition, a significant influx of refugees from Darfur, the Sudan, into areas contaminated with explosive remnants of war in Chad was recorded. On 28 June and 5 July, eight refugee children from Darfur, between 8 and 14 years of age, were killed (two boys) or maimed (six girls) in two incidents involving explosive remnants of war in Amboukoun, Tissi. I encourage the Chadian authorities to continue to work closely with the United Nations to provide refugee children with adequate protection and care.

Côte d'Ivoire

52. Despite the ongoing peace and reconciliation process and ongoing efforts regarding the reintegration of ex-combatants, the overall child protection situation remains of concern in the light of insecurity in some areas and a lack of accountability for grave violations against children.

53. In 2013, the United Nations documented a total of 30 grave violations against children perpetrated by the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI). Four cases of recruitment and use of children by FRCI were documented. The children, between 13 and 17 years of age, were manning FRCI checkpoints in Mankono and M'bahiakro and, in one case, served as a cook.

54. Sexual violence against children remained the most recurrent violation. At least 23 girls, between 11 and 17 years of age, were raped by FRCI elements (20) and unknown armed elements (3) in the northern and western parts of the country. Following advocacy by the United Nations, five FRCI elements were arrested, but charges were reclassified to indecent assault. At the time of reporting, one of the arrested FRCI elements had been prosecuted, and condemned to five years of imprisonment and fined. The impunity and weak capacity of the national judicial system to address sexual violence have hindered access to justice for victims across the country, including in Abidjan. As a result of such gaps in institutional capacity, but also owing to the fear of retaliation and stigmatization, out-of-court settlements of rape cases remain frequent and to the detriment of the victims' rights to access justice and compensation.

55. The United Nations also verified five cases of military use of schools and hospitals by FRCI. For example, a primary school in Dja-Kouakoukro was used by FRCI for military purposes, preventing children from attending classes for two

months. In addition, a health centre in Ranouinke had been used by FRCI since 2011. Following advocacy efforts, check points in the vicinity of three schools in Touba were dismantled in March 2013.

56. My Special Representative visited Côte d'Ivoire from 26 to 30 October 2013. During that occasion, she discussed with the national authorities the issue of impunity for sexual violence against children and advocated for the removal of the victim's obligation to produce a medical certificate as a requirement for filing a complaint and pressing charges against perpetrators.

57. A series of training and capacity-building sessions on child protection were organized by the United Nations for the defence and security forces. In November, a child protection cell was re-established within FRCI to liaise with child protection actors and deal with child protection concerns. The draft national child protection policy to address violence against children, assistance to child victims and the issue of impunity was pending adoption by the Government at the time of reporting. Furthermore, on 5 December, the Government adopted guidelines and procedures for service providers for the prevention, referral of and response to grave violations committed against children. Accountability for sexual violence against children and improved access to justice and adequate services should be the priorities for improved protection of children in Côte d'Ivoire.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

58. On 24 February 2013, as a result of international and regional mediation efforts, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region was signed in Addis Ababa by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 10 regional countries as well as four international organizations. However, hostilities between the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) continued until the military defeat of M23 in November. In the northern part of North Kivu, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) intensified attacks on FARDC and the civilian population, prompting FARDC to respond with the support of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in early 2014. In addition, the security situation in Katanga Province also deteriorated in the last months of 2013, with systematic attacks on villages by Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga.

59. The United Nations documented 910 children (783 boys and 127 girls), who had been newly recruited and used by armed groups. Among them, 609 were Congolese, 28 Rwandan, and 5 Ugandan, while the nationality of 268 children remained undetermined. Almost half of the children were reportedly used as combatants, but children were also used as porters, cooks, informants and in other support roles. Most of the girls were subjected to sexual slavery. Armed groups recruiting children included the Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga, Mayi Mayi Simba "Morgan" and other Mayi Mayi groups (297 children), Nyatura (338), the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) (47), M23 (38), Raïa Mutomboki (37), Forces populaires congolais-Armée Populaire (FPC/AP) (ex-PARECO) (24), Forces de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FRPI) (22), Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS) (18), Union des patriotes congolais pour la paix (16), Nduma défense du Congo (NDC)/Cheka (15) and other armed groups (58).

60. With regard to preventing new child recruits into FARDC during the comprehensive recruitment campaign in 2013, the United Nations separated 113 children, including 79 from training centres to which the United Nations was granted unimpeded access under the action plan process.

61. At least 136 children were arrested and detained by FARDC for alleged association with armed groups. Of these, 21 children formerly associated with M23 (13 Congolese and 8 claiming to be Rwandan) were arrested in North and South Kivu and transferred to FARDC military intelligence headquarters in Kinshasa. All children except for one were released following advocacy by MONUSCO.

62. At least 68 children were killed in 2013, compared with 154 documented cases in 2012; and at least 96 were maimed, compared with 113 documented cases in 2012. Most casualties were attributed to Mayi Mayi groups. For instance, on 25 September 2013, in Bulende, North Kivu, NDC/Cheka elements killed six children. In February 2013, Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga killed at least seven children and maimed four others during an attack on Kabwele village, Katanga. Two four-year-old girls were locked into a hut and burned alive, while other children were killed or maimed by arrows and bullets. M23 was responsible for 24 child casualties, mainly during clashes with FARDC. On 11 December 2013, in an attack by ADF in Beni Territory, 11 children, including a two-month-old girl, were severely mutilated and killed with machetes. Finally, FARDC was involved in the killing and maiming of 36 children, predominantly during clashes with armed groups. For example, on 24 July 2013, three children were killed and four maimed when FARDC launched rockets on M23 positions in Rumangabo, North Kivu.

63. The United Nations verified 209 cases of conflict-related sexual violence against girls, some as young as 4 years of age. Mayi Mayi groups and FARDC were identified as the main perpetrators with 91 and 43 verified cases, respectively. Mayi Mayi Simba "Morgan" elements in Orientale Province raped 59 girls in 2013. For instance, following the rape of 19 girls during an attack on 6 January 2013 in Mambasa territory, 25 girls were raped on 5 February during an attack on Bafwambaya village, Haut-Uélé territory.

64. Impunity for the perpetrators of sexual violence remained a concern. Of the 209 perpetrators identified, 66 were arrested and 36 were sentenced. Thirty-nine FARDC elements and seven high-ranking officers were also accused of mass rapes and other human rights violations committed in and around Minova, South Kivu, in late November and early December 2012 and are currently undergoing trial before the Operational Military Court of North Kivu Province.

65. The United Nations verified 95 attacks on schools. ADF were the most recurrent perpetrators, looting 21 schools in Beni territory, North Kivu, followed by FRPI, which looted and damaged 10 schools in Irumu territory, Ituri district. Other incidents were attributed to FARDC, Mayi Mayi groups, including APCLS, Yakutumba, and LaFontaine, FDLR, Raïa Mutomboki, Nyatura and M23. In addition, 25 incidents of military use of schools were reported, including 13 cases by FARDC. Forty-two attacks on hospitals were also documented, including the looting of medical supplies and equipment, affecting the health care of at least 5,000 children in North Kivu and Orientale Province. Seventeen cases were attributed to ADF, nine to FARDC, three to FRPI and two to M23. FARDC were urged by the United Nations to take disciplinary measures against FARDC elements that attacked or used schools or hospitals, as stipulated in the respective directive of 3 May 2013.

66. Parties to the conflict abducted 147 children (70 girls and 77 boys) in 2013. The abductees were mainly recruited as combatants, or subjected to sexual slavery or forced labour in mining sites controlled by armed groups. The vast majority of abductions occurred in Orientale Province (79) and in North Kivu (77). The most notorious perpetrators were Mayi Mayi Simba "Morgan", abducting 39 children (27 girls and 12 boys), mainly for sexual slavery, followed by ADF (12 girls and 16 boys) and the FRPI (19 boys and 3 girls). FARDC reportedly abducted nine girls and one boy, as young as six. FARDC elements in Bweremana, North Kivu, and a group of presumed deserters from the same regiment were involved in two separate cases involving the abduction and rape of a total of nine girls.

67. The United Nations documented 109 security incidents affecting humanitarian access, of which 104 took place in the Kivus, attributed to the Raïa Mutomboki (16), FARDC (14), M23 (4) and the Police nationale congolaise (4) as well as Mayi Mayi and unknown armed groups. In 39 of these incidents, FARDC (12) or armed groups (27) elements physically assaulted humanitarian workers on duty.

68. A total of 1,722 children (210 girls and 1,512 boys), recruited both in 2013 and previous years, were separated from armed groups and armed forces in 2013. They escaped or were released mainly from Mayi Mayi groups (635), Nyatura (354), FDLR (140), Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (19), M23 (83) and FARDC (10 in addition to the 113 mentioned above). The United Nations, in close cooperation with the Government of Uganda, was also following up on the status of 96 unaccompanied children among M23 elements who fled to Uganda. Throughout 2013, UNICEF partners have provided assistance to a total of 4,804 children (738 girls and 4,083 boys) formerly associated with armed groups and armed forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

69. In November, my Special Representative visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo to assess the Government's progress in the implementation of the action plan. On 3 May, the Ministry of Defence issued a directive prohibiting the killing, maiming and, recruitment of, and sexual violence against, children as well as the military use of schools and hospitals, foreseeing disciplinary measures or military prosecution. The same day, the Agence nationale de renseignement issued a directive for children in detention for alleged association with armed groups to be handed over to the United Nations. FARDC has designated child protection focal points to work with the United Nations country task force in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since its establishment in December 2012, the joint technical working group in Kinshasa held 17 meetings and started a national prevention campaign.

Iraq

70. 2013 was marked by a significant increase in the number of security incidents, resulting in the killing of 7,818 civilians, including at least 248 children. This is the highest number of casualties reported since 2008. The most affected governorates were Baghdad, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Diyala, Anbar, Wassit and Salahaddin. The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQ-I) were allegedly responsible for most of the documented incidents.

71. Reports from the governorates of Anbar, Ninewa and Salahaddin indicated the continued association of children with various armed groups, including AQ-I. In addition, continued reports were received on boys manning the checkpoints of the

Awakening Councils under the control of the Ministry of Defence after having been recruited locally with falsified identification papers. Reporting is limited due to issues of access, insecurity in relevant areas, and the reluctance of authorities to release information on perpetrators. I note that Iraqi law prohibits the recruitment of children into Government forces and encourages its criminalization, in line with obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

72. As at December 2013, according to the Government, at least 391 children, including 18 girls, were being held in juvenile reformatory detention facilities (237), prisons or police stations under indictment or conviction for terrorism-related charges under article 4 of the Anti-Terrorism Act (2005). The children had been detained for periods ranging from two months to more than three years. Schools and learning programmes were established in four juvenile detention centres in the governorates of Baghdad, Thi-Qar and Basra with the support of the Ministry of Education and UNICEF.

73. According to the Government, 335 children were killed and 1,326 others injured in 2013. The United Nations, in 167 verified incidents, recorded 248 children killed and 665 others injured, including as a result of improvised explosive devices and in complex attacks. AQ-I was reportedly responsible for most of the incidents. On 11 March 2013, in Dibis district, Kirkuk governorate, the explosion of a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device caused substantial damage to an adjacent secondary school and injured 106 students (70 boys and 36 girls, between 13 and 17 years of age). Assassinations and raids targeting members of the Awakening Council, police officers or military personnel and their families were also on the rise, resulting in the killing of 13 children and the injuring of 18 others in direct or indirect fire.

74. Twenty-seven attacks on schools and hospitals/medical facilities were reported, of which five were verified. Most were a result of improvised explosive devices placed inside or in the vicinity of schools and hospitals in the governorates of Baghdad, Anbar, Diyala and Ninewa. On 6 October, in Qabak village (Ninewa governorate), 15 children were killed and at least 112 injured by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated in the playground of the primary school. The head of the school and an unknown number of teachers were also killed. On 27 June, in Baquba district (Diyala governorate), five ambulances were destroyed in the explosion of a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device as they arrived to a scene where many civilians, including children, had been killed and injured in a previous improvised explosive devise attack on a popular café. No one claimed responsibility for any of those incidents.

75. The United Nations also verified the killing or injuring of 13 education personnel and 16 medical staff. In an incident in Diyala governorate, on 1 August, a medical doctor was killed and his two children wounded in an improvised explosive device attack against their house by AQ-I, reportedly because he refused to issue falsified death certificates for the armed group. Threats against teachers, particularly in Diyala governorate, are a growing source of concern. For example, in December, flyers were spread in Diyala threatening English language teachers in primary and secondary schools. No one claimed responsibility for the incident. At the same time, a threat was publicized in social media targeting medical personnel and medical facilities.

76. On 28 November, in Wassit governorate, the 10-year-old son of a member of the local human rights committee was abducted and found dead, with apparent signs of torture. Owing to the sensitivity and suspicion involved in collecting information on abduction cases from communities or authorities and the reluctance of families to report to the police, abductions are believed to be underreported.

77. Interaction on child protection between the United Nations and the Iraqi authorities continued at the national and local levels throughout 2013. However, it remains a serious source of concern that the Government of Iraq is not adequately addressing the impact of the ongoing conflict on children. I urge the Government to take all measures to ensure an adequate response to the plight of children, including through the adoption of laws criminalizing violations committed against children by parties to the conflict. The United Nations in Iraq stands ready to further engage with the Government in tackling the issue. Due attention must be given to the detention of children under security charges. Legislative reform and appropriate policies and programmes for the overall protection of children in armed conflict, including the engagement of community, religious and tribal leaders, should also be addressed. The implementation of a high-level Government interministerial committee on children and armed conflict, as advocated for by my Special Representative during her meetings with Government representatives during her visit to Iraq in July 2013, would facilitate regular information-sharing on and response to grave violations against children, as well as collaboration with the United Nations in Iraq.

Israel and the State of Palestine

78. Palestinian and Israeli children continued to be affected by the prevailing situation of military occupation, conflict and closure. Eight Palestinian children (six boys and two girls) were killed and 1,265 were injured in the occupied Palestinian territories in 2013. In the West Bank, an upsurge was observed in the number of Palestinian children killed and injured by Israeli security forces during clashes and as a result of violence by Israeli settlers. Eight Israeli children were injured in the West Bank in incidents related to the presence of Israeli settlements, while no Israeli children were killed in 2013.

79. In the West Bank, four Palestinian boys were killed by live ammunition, including three during incursions by Israeli security forces into the Al Jalazun, Jenin and Ayda refugee camps. Incursions into camps have increased by 60 per cent compared with 2012. For example, on 7 December 2013, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy was shot and killed by the Israel Defense Forces near Al Jalazun, allegedly while throwing stones at the soldiers. The Israeli authorities under the Military Advocate General opened investigations in all four cases, which were under review at the time of reporting. The 1,235 children injured in the West Bank constitute more than double the number injured in 2012 (552). Of the 1,235, 961 were injured during clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians during demonstrations, 183 during military operations, including search and arrest operations in villages or camps, four as a result of unexploded ordnances, and 86 as a result of settler violence, which saw a significant increase during 2013. During settler-related incidents, 49 children were injured directly by Israeli settlers by physical assault and stones or glass bottles thrown against Palestinian houses or cars. Of the 1,235 children injured in the West Bank, 155 were under the age of 12. Eight Israeli children were injured in Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including as a result of

stone throwing by Palestinians (seven) and, in one incident, live ammunition shot towards the Psagot settlement.

80. In Gaza, most cases of killing and maiming Palestinian children occurred between January and March 2013, following the November 2012 Israeli military offensive "Pillar of Defence". Three Palestinian children were killed, including two boys in unexploded ordnance-related incidents and, on 24 December 2013, a three-year-old girl in a shelling by Israeli security forces of a building in Al Maghazi refugee camp. Ten children were injured during military operations in Gaza, including by live ammunition gun shots and tear gas canisters, and 20 others as a result of unexploded ordnance incidents.

81. In 2013, Palestinian children continued to be arrested and detained by Israeli security forces and prosecuted in juvenile military courts. By the end of December, 154 boys, between 14 and 17 years of age (including 14 under the age of 16) were held in Israeli military detention for alleged security violations, including in pretrial detention (106) and serving a sentence (48). The Government of Israel reported that 1,004 children were arrested by Israeli security forces in 2013; 349 were released the same day and 655 were referred to the Military Advocate General. The United Nations documented 107 cases of ill-treatment during arrest, transfer, interrogation and detention, including against children below the age of 12 in five cases. All of the 107 boys reported having been subjected to cruel and degrading ill-treatment by the Israel Defense Forces and the Israeli police, including painful restraint, blindfolding, strip-searching, verbal and physical abuse, solitary confinement and threats of violence. This number represents an estimated 15 per cent of the total number of Palestinian children arrested and detained in the West Bank by Israeli security forces in 2013. Fifty-one children reported being arrested at night and 45 children reported being arrested during clashes, demonstrations and at other friction points. Reported use of physical violence against children, including with sticks, increased with a majority of the cases reported in the first half of 2013. The Israeli authorities received 15 formal complaints in 2013 related to the reported abuse of Palestinian children during arrest, interrogation and detention. No cases have resulted in dismissal, indictment or arrest to date. In addition, five cases of threats of sexual violence were reported, compared with two cases in 2012. A higher percentage of children were detained in prison facilities inside Israel (76 per cent, compared with 63 in 2012) with at least three out of four children being transferred outside the occupied Palestinian territory in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

82. A regular bilateral dialogue between the United Nations at the field level and the Military Prosecutor for the West Bank was ongoing at the time of reporting and has produced a number of results, including an Israel Defense Forces agreement to pilot test the use of summonses in lieu of night arrests. However, incidents have occurred where children were threatened while being summoned, and other summons were presented during night raids. I remain hopeful that the pilot process will be fully implemented and provide adequate protection for children. In addition, two Military Orders were issued in relation to children arrested and detained for alleged security violations. The orders reduced the time a Palestinian child could be detained prior to appearing before a military court judge for the first time; however, the time periods provided in military law are still longer than what is provided to Israeli children under Israeli law.

83. Fifty-eight education-related incidents affecting 11,935 children were reported in the West Bank, resulting in damage to school facilities, interruption of classes and injury to children. Forty-one incidents involved Israeli security forces operations near or inside schools, forced entry without forewarning, the firing of tear gas canisters and sound bombs into school yards and, in some cases, structural damage to schools. In 15 of the incidents, Israeli security forces fired tear gas canisters into schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), some during class hours, without forewarning. In a majority of instances, schoolchildren and teachers were delayed or prevented from going to school owing to checkpoints, areas closed for military operations or exercises, military patrols in front of schools and preventive closures by the Israel Defense Forces. In 32 cases, teachers and children were arrested inside the school, at checkpoints or on their way to school. A further 15 incidents were related to settler violence in the areas of Nablus, Qalqiliya, Jerusalem and Hebron. This included physical assault of schoolchildren by settlers, absent or interrupted Israeli security forces escorts to schools in areas prone to settler violence, the evacuation of schools owing to the threat of settler attacks and sewage from Israeli settlements intentionally flooding school grounds. According to the Government of Israel, 63 rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel during 2013, resulting in school interferences for 12,229 Israeli children. The ceasefire understanding between the Government of Israel and Hamas resulted in a marked reduction of attacks on schools in Gaza. One incident was reported on 25 December, when Israeli security forces fired rockets damaging two schools. Shortages of construction materials in September 2013 owing to Israeli restrictions halted the construction of 13 Government schools, postponed the construction of another 26 and, in November, forced UNRWA to suspend the construction of 22 schools.

84. The Israeli blockade of Gaza since June 2007 continued to take a heavy toll on the more than 80 per cent of Gazan families dependent on humanitarian assistance. In 2013, 4,059 of 4,470 medical applications for children were approved; however, 409 applications, including for 215 boys and 194 girls, were delayed, usually as a result of the denial or delay of a permit for the child's parent. In one incident, the application of a 16-year-old girl scheduled to receive cancer treatment in Israel was delayed for 73 days. The recent movement restrictions imposed by the Government of Egypt have also affected the access to medical referrals.

85. I commend the State of Palestine for acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Lebanon

86. 2013 was marked by a significant increase in violence as a result of explosions inside Lebanon and along its borders, as well as sectarian violence between factions and communities, further exacerbated by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

87. The United Nations continued to receive allegations of use of children in sectarian clashes, specifically in the Tripoli neighbourhoods of Jabal Mohsen and Bab al-Tebbaneh, and on children in Lebanon being pressured into joining armed groups in the Syrian Arab Republic. The majority of allegations received concerned Lebanese sectarian groups aligned with armed groups in the Syrian Arab Republic. Regarding the allegations of the involvement of children in armed violence in

Lebanon, I note the joint declaration by representatives of factions of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and of the forces of the Palestinian National Coalition in Lebanon, prohibiting the recruitment and use of children within their organizations.

88. Despite restricted monitoring access owing to the security situation, the United Nations documented 56 incidents of violations against children, including the killing of 11 children and injury caused to 21 others by landmines, unexploded ordnance, cross-border shelling from the Syrian Arab Republic, sectarian armed clashes and sniper fire.

89. The United Nations received confirmed information on 24 school buildings sustaining damage during clashes between sectarian groups as well as between sectarian groups and Government forces, specifically in Tripoli and in Sidon between the Sunni radical faction of Sheikh Ahmad al-Asir and the Lebanese Armed Forces in June. A total of 36 schools, namely in Sidon (20); Ein el-Helweh Palestinian Camp (9); Nahr el-Bared Palestinian Camp (5); and el Beddawi Palestinian Camp (2), were temporarily closed due to security threats and nearby clashes, affecting more than 40,000 students.

90. With the large influx of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanon, I thank the Government's efforts to enrol more than 102,000 Syrian children in the public school system. Moreover, UNRWA ensured access to education for more than 7,000 Palestinian refugee children from the Syrian Arab Republic in Lebanon. However, up to 300,000 refugee children remain without access to education.

91. During her visit to Lebanon in July 2013, my Special Representative met with senior members of the Government of Lebanon who committed to finalizing the ratification process of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which was pending in parliament. In late 2013, the Minister of Social Affairs publically called on all concerned actors in Lebanon to take concrete steps to end and prevent all violations against children in armed conflict. In view of the impact of armed conflict, including the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, on Lebanese children and refugee children in Lebanon, I urge the Government of Lebanon to follow up on the commitment made to my Special Representative and the call by the Minister for ratification of the Optional Protocol.

Libya

92. The situation for children in Libya remained precarious in 2013, with political tensions escalating into armed confrontations in al-Ajailat, al-Shagiga, Ghadamis, Tripoli, Benghazi and Sabha, sometimes involving the use of heavy weapons. The United Nations continued to experience difficulty in gathering information owing to lack of security and a full monitoring mandate. Notwithstanding attempts by the Government to increase its control, many armed brigades under the nominal control of the Government continued to display a lack of discipline and command and control, leading in some instances to grave violations against children.

93. The United Nations documented the killing of 14 children (12 boys and 2 girls) between 4 and 17 years of age, and the injury of five others (four boys and one girl) in crossfire and improvised explosive device incidents or as a result of heavy weaponry. For example, in April in al-Shagiga, Nafousa Mountains, a four-year-old boy from the Mashashiya tribe was killed by a rocket hitting the family home during a clash between the Mashashiya and Zintan tribes. In three separate

incidents in Benghazi on 30 July, 3 August and 3 November, four boys, between 2 and 15 years of age, were killed in improvised explosive device attacks against their fathers, who were security officers. In Tripoli on 15 November, members of a Misratah brigade stationed in the Ghargour neighbourhood of Tripoli opened fire on protestors. During the ensuing clashes in Tripoli, at least 46 people were killed, including a 15-year-old girl and a 17-year-old boy, and 516 others were injured, including an unknown number of children.

94. Seven incidents of attacks on hospitals were recorded by the United Nations in Benghazi and Sabha, including explosions, the targeting of medical staff and shooting inside medical facilities by armed militias. For example, on 30 July, in Benghazi, armed men broke into a secure ward in the city's Al-Hawri hospital to carry out a revenge killing, shooting one man dead. In Benghazi, on 13 May, an improvised explosive device exploded in front of Al-Jalaa hospital, killing a 14-year-old boy and two adults as well as wounding up to 30 others. On 27 August, two out of three hospitals in Benghazi closed down owing to staff protesting against violence, following the beating of nurses, stabbing of doctors and smashing of equipment by armed elements. In addition, in May 2013, a device was detonated inside a school in the al-Salmani neighbourhood of Benghazi by unknown perpetrators without casualty. In October 2013, also in Banghazi, another explosion took place in al-Alwiya al-Hura school.

95. The United Nations continued to visit detention facilities where children were held, including six Tawergha boys 16 years of age in al-Wihda prison in Misrata, held since 2011 without charges. I call upon the Government of Libya to expedite the review of such cases by the competent judicial authorities as a priority.

Lord's Resistance Army (Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan)

96. Despite continuing reports of sporadic attacks and abductions of children by LRA across the LRA-affected region, LRA has morphed into smaller cells and appears to have changed its modus operandi owing to the military pressure of the African Union regional task force. However, the instability in the Central African Republic and South Sudan could heighten the risk of an LRA resurgence in those areas. Attacks by LRA in 2013 largely took place in remote areas in the north-eastern region of Haut-Kotto prefecture of the Central African Republic, and in the Uélé districts of Orientale Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United Nations recorded 353,000 persons, among them many children, displaced in areas affected by LRA.

97. During the reporting period, four boys were reportedly recruited by LRA in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, marking a drastic decrease in reported cases compared to previous years. In addition, two girls were killed by LRA elements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

98. Abductions of children by LRA remained stable with 65 cases reported from the south-eastern region of the Central African Republic (47) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Haut-Uélé district (18). The children were used for looting and the transport of pillaged goods and released within a short period of time. It is important to note that children, in particular girls, abducted or recruited by LRA are regularly subjected to sexual violence.

99. In 2013, 177 children were separated from LRA, including 121 Congolese, 47 Central Africans, 8 Ugandans and 1 South Sudanese. UNICEF and partners were supporting a transit centre in Yambio, South Sudan, where children received psychosocial counselling and medical services together with ongoing family tracing.

Mali

100. In 2013, the United Nations monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children was established in Mali following the listing of Ansar Dine, the Mouvement national pour la liberation de l'Azawad (MNLA), and the Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO) in the annexes of my previous annual report. Favourable political and security developments occurred in Mali during the second half of 2013, including the signing of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement and the successful holding of presidential and legislative elections, which contributed to a significant decrease in the cases of grave violations recorded. However, armed incursions by MUJAO into the northern regions of Kidal and Gao continued, putting children formerly associated with armed groups at risk of re-recruitment. Humanitarian and monitoring access to northern Mali remained severely limited due to security and capacity constraints.

101. All armed groups in the North, including Al-Qaida au Maghreb Islamique, Ansar Dine, MNLA and MUJAO perpetrated grave violations against children. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 57 children, all boys as young as 11 years of age. Most of the boys were recruited in the first half of 2013 by MUJAO and the MNLA and were used in combat, to man checkpoints and in support roles. Reportedly, families, imams and community leaders have facilitated the recruitment of children into armed groups. Children entrusted by their parents to marabouts were particularly vulnerable, and religious schools often served as places for indoctrination and recruitment.

102. The detention of children formerly associated with parties to conflict remained a concern. By December, the United Nations had verified the detention of 24 children under security charges after separation from armed groups by the Forces armées et de sécuritées du Mali during military operations. Despite the signing of a protocol on the release and handover of children between the Government of Mali and the United Nations on 1 July, nine boys remained detained in Bamako under security charges at the time of reporting. The United Nations continued to follow up on this issue, in particular on children detained before the signing of the protocol.

103. Children constitute more than half of the documented casualties of explosive remnants of war in Mali with at least six killed and 51 others injured in 2013. In addition, children were killed and maimed in attacks by armed groups, including through the use of terror tactics. For example, on 23 October, a six-year-old boy was killed in a suicide attack on a checkpoint of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

104. As of December, 147,425 students returned to 769 reopened schools in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu; the regions that were most affected by the conflict. During the height of the conflict in 2013, all 1,418 schools in northern Mali were closed for an extended period. Access to education was also restricted owing to the use of schools by the military. For instance, on 14 November, 30 MNLA elements established a front post in a high school in Kidal town.

105. On 7 February 2013, an interministerial circular was signed by relevant ministers, outlining their commitment to end and prevent the recruitment of children and to ensure appropriate reintegration provisions. In addition, an initial 600 MSDF elements were trained on child protection by the United Nations. On 7 August 2013, the Government of Mali accepted the joint verification mechanism proposed by MINUSMA to conduct physical and administrative screening of elements of the Forces armées et de sécuritées du Mali .

106. I encourage the Malian authorities to swiftly operationalize this joint mechanism and to ensure that specific procedures for the separation and reintegration of children associated with armed groups and forces are included in the development of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

Myanmar

107. The recruitment and use of children by parties to conflict continued to be a concern in 2013. The United Nations received complaints of 37 children newly recruited into the Tatmadaw, including a 12-year-old boy, and 196 others previously recruited. Children used by the Tatmadaw continued to be deployed to the frontline as combatants and in other roles, in particular in Kachin State.

108. The number of reported arrests of children under charges of desertion from the Tatmadaw increased in 2013. Of 98 boys associated with the Tatmadaw, who were reported under the International Labour Organization (ILO) complaint mechanism, 40 were documented as absent without leave. Of the 40, 10 children were arrested and detained for alleged desertion. Four of the children were released from detention and discharged, including two in January 2014. In addition, children were arrested because of their alleged association with armed groups. For example, in Kachin State, a 16-year-old displaced boy was taken by the Tatmadaw on suspicion of being a Kachin Independence Army (KIA) soldier. He was released after being used as a porter for weapons for two days.

109. Armed groups also continued to recruit and use children, including the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) and the Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council. Several cases of children associated with KIA and KNLA were reported and verified. One boy was separated from KNLA upon advocacy by ILO. In a single incident in December 2013, the KIA forcibly recruited an unknown number of children from among 50 people. Thirty-two people had been released by the end of the reporting period. The remaining villagers, save one, were released in early January. Lack of access prevented the verification of reported use of children by the Shan State Army South, the Karenni National Progressive Party/Karenni Army (KNPP/KA) and the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA). Approximately 20 children suspected of association with the United Wa State Army (UWSA) were observed by the United Nations in northern Shan State. On a positive note, the United Nations began to re-engage with armed groups listed for recruitment and use, including KNLA and KNPP/KA. KNPP proactively approached my Special Representative and subsequently the United Nations in Myanmar with a letter to renew previous engagements on the issue.

110. At least seven children were killed and six others injured in sporadic fighting between the Tatmadaw and KIA in Kachin and northern Shan States, including air strikes by the Tatmadaw. In addition, a two-month-old boy was injured by a grenade during a clash between the Tatmadaw and the KNLA on 16 March in Papun district,

Karen State. Also in Karen State, Hpa-an district, on 27 April, a newborn baby and an 18-month-old girl were injured in shelling during a clash between the Tatmadaw and the DKBA. Although it could not be verified whether parties to conflict continued to use landmines, limited efforts at demining, marking and signing continued to put children at risk. During the reporting period, four boys, between 13 and 17 years of age, were killed by landmines in Kayin and Kachin States and five boys, between 10 and 16 years of age, were injured by landmines in Kachin and Northern Shan State. In addition, the communal violence in Rakhine State continued to preoccupy child protection actors.

111. During clashes between the Tatmadaw and KIA from October to November 2013, several schools were reportedly damaged in Kachin State and several others were closed. From late December 2012 until mid-February 2013, schools in Laiza, Kachin State, remained closed owing to fighting between KIA and the Tatmadaw. Allegations of schools being damaged by the Tatmadaw in Shan State could not be verified because of denial of access to the area. In November 2013, Tatmadaw troops, reportedly to minimize civilian casualties, surrounded a Boarding School in Mansi Township, Kachin State, forcing over 300 schoolchildren to flee. In addition, in Kachin and northern Shan State, mine fields laid by the Tatmadaw and KIA in close proximity to schools and hospitals remained a concern.

112. Several reports of sexual violence against children by Tatmadaw soldiers were received in 2013, including the alleged gang-rape of a 14-year-old girl in northern Kachin State. In February 2014, a Tatmadaw soldier was sentenced to life imprisonment by a civilian court for the rape of a seven-year-old girl in northern Shan State.

113. Humanitarian access to areas affected by armed conflict improved during the reporting period but remained restricted in certain areas, including areas beyond Government control in Kachin and Kayin States. Humanitarian access to such areas was only granted in June, September and November, when seven humanitarian cross-line missions assisted over 23,000 people.

114. Access for monitoring purposes covered under the action plan with the Government of Myanmar improved during the reporting period but remained limited. An initial eight monitoring visits were allowed to selected operational Tatmadaw units in the second half of 2013. On 29 May, the United Nations and representatives of the Government conducted a joint midterm review on progress and challenges in the implementation of the action plan. In November, the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict conducted a field visit to Myanmar, welcoming the Government's respective progress and stressing the need for continued efforts under the framework. In that regard, I welcome Myanmar's renewed commitment to the extended action plan in early 2014.

115. In 2013, 178 children, in one case as young as 12, were separated from the Tatmadaw, including 134 under the framework of the action plan and 15 through the ILO forced labour complaint mechanism. At the time of reporting, 197 other complaints of child recruitment shared by the United Nations were under review by the Government. Reports on the recruitment of children by the Tatmadaw received through the action plan complaints mechanism established in November 2012 increased significantly towards the end of the reporting period owing to a nationwide awareness campaign in consultation with the Government. I commend the ratification of ILO convention 182 (1999), prohibiting the worst forms of child

labour, including the recruitment and use of children. The United Nations in Myanmar stands ready to support the implementation of the action plan and to further engage with armed groups to end and prevent child recruitment. In that regard, I am encouraged by the ongoing peace talks between the Government and several non-State parties listed for the recruitment and use of children.

Somalia

116. The United Nations documented the recruitment and use of 1,293 children, including by Al-Shabaab (908), the Somali National Army and allied militia (209), and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) (111). The remaining cases were attributed to the Somaliland Armed Forces (15) and to unknown armed elements (36). Al-Shabaab continued its campaign for the recruitment of children and youth. For instance, on 24 January, Al-Shabaab recruited six boys, as young as 12, in a Koranic school in south-west Baidoa. In separate incidents, 19 children, as young as 15, were recruited during dedicated campaigns in Bardhere district, Gedo region, and Jilib district, Middle Juba region. Al-Shabaab uses children in various roles, including as combatants and to gather intelligence. Of particular concern are 14 cases of association of children with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in various capacities, including to man checkpoints and as cooks. The United Nations has been regularly engaging with AMISOM leadership with a view to addressing these cases and enhancing the mainstreaming of child protection.

117. The arbitrary arrest and detention of 1,009 children by the national army, including during operations against Al-Shabaab, remained a grave concern in 2013. In 11 cases, girls who had been arrested were also raped. Upon advocacy by the United Nations, 41 children detained by the national army for alleged association with Al-Shabaab were released in 2013.

118. At least 237 children were reportedly killed (179 boys and 58 girls) and 494 children were injured (383 boys and 111 girls) in 2013. The national army and allied militias were reportedly responsible for 334 child casualties (98 killed and 236 injured), followed by unknown armed groups (83 killed, 174 injured), Al-Shabaab (47 killed, 67 injured), AMISOM (7 killed, 14 injured), ASWJ (two killed, one injured), and the Puntland and the Somaliland forces (one child each injured). Child casualties mainly resulted from crossfire during clashes and indiscriminate shelling. Thirty children were killed and 51 others injured in incidents involving improvised explosive devices. In one incident, in December, a 16-year-old boy was executed by the Al-Shabaab for attempted desertion.

119. In 154 incidents of sexual violence, 152 girls and 2 boys were raped, including by unknown armed elements (65), members of the national army and allied militias (49), Al-Shabaab (31), ASWJ (7) and the Somaliland forces (2). Twenty of the girls were subjected to sexual violence in the context of forced marriages following recruitment into Al-Shabaab. The rape of 21 children in 19 separate incidents by national army and unknown armed elements inside internally displaced persons camps was a particular concern since the camps were supposed to be a safe place for displaced children.

120. Fifty-four attacks on schools and 11 attacks on hospitals by the national army (28), Al-Shabaab (18), unknown armed groups (7) and ASWJ (1) were documented. Four of the attacks on schools by Al-Shabaab and an unknown armed

group resulted in the recruitment of 34 boys. In addition, Al-Shabaab used schools for recruitment campaigns.

121. In 2013, 863 boys and 237 girls formerly associated with armed forces or groups were enrolled in reintegration programmes in Mogadishu, Merka, Guriel, Dhusamareb and Afgoye districts. The United Nations also continued to engage with the Federal Government of Somalia to ensure the implementation of the two action plans to end and prevent the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children by the national army. With the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission (UNSOM) in July, one Child Protection Adviser was deployed to further support the process. In addition, a working group on children and armed conflict, comprising representatives of the Government, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and the donor community, was established in Mogadishu and reviewed standard operating procedures for the handover of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups before adoption by the Government in March 2014. Furthermore, I welcome the commitment of the Federal Government of Somalia to become party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, in particular in respect of the involvement of children in armed conflict, and urge the Government to ratify them.

South Sudan

122. Before the most recent crisis, the Government of South Sudan had made tangible progress in addressing grave violations against children and implementing an action plan to end the recruitment and use of children. Such progress included issuing command orders to stop recruitment and use of children within the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), undertaking joint verification visits with the United Nations to SPLA barracks, and regular training of SPLA troops. On 15 December 2013, fighting erupted between factions of SPLA aligned with the Government and former Vice-President Riek Machar Teny, reversing the initial progress made under the action plan.

123. The United Nations received credible information on grave violations against children by both pro-Government forces and opposition forces aligned with Riek Machar Teny. Thousands of children were reportedly mobilized in Upper Nile and Jonglei States by the Nuer ethnic group aligned with opposition forces, also known as the "White Army". Thousands of children were killed or maimed, raped, displaced or orphaned. Attacks on schools and hospitals and their military use by all parties were also widespread, depriving children of access to education and health care and adding to the humanitarian crisis. Although the United Nations was able to verify limited numbers of violations against children by all parties to conflict, documented cases remained only indicative at the time of reporting and further verification was ongoing. In the hospitals of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in Juba and Malakal alone, 110 children received treatment for conflict-related injuries. Since the United Nations was still verifying information regarding ongoing violations at the time of reporting, the cases reported below are limited to the period before the events following 15 December 2013.

124. Before the crisis, the United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 162 children, all boys and mostly between 14 and 17 years of age. Of the 162 children, 99 were associated with SPLA, 3 with South Sudan national police services and 35 with militia allied to David Yau Yau in Jonglei, and 25 were

mobilized from Lou Nuer tribe to conduct community policing in Jonglei State. Children associated with SPLA were identified in military barracks, wearing SPLA uniforms as well as undergoing military training in conflict areas. In addition, reports of the recruitment and use of 133 children were pending verification at the time of reporting.

125. Sixty-three children were killed and 83 injured prior to the December crisis. Child casualties resulted from clashes between SPLA and armed groups, from inter-communal conflict in Jonglei, and from five separate incidents involving explosive remnants of war in Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei and Unity States.

126. The United Nations verified information of seven cases of sexual violence affecting seven girls. Individual SPLA soldiers in Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, Upper Nile and Western Bahr-el-Ghazal States were allegedly responsible for the incidents.

127. During the reporting period, 26 new incidents of military use of schools and hospitals by SPLA (19), South Sudan national police services (6) and non-State actors (1) were documented, affecting the access to education of approximately 13,000 children. By 15 December, seven schools remained in use by SPLA, in contravention of the military order of 14 August 2013. The increased use of schools by SPLA also resulted from lessened cooperation with the United Nations following changes in SPLA leadership in January 2013. In addition, the United Nations verified the looting and burning of two hospitals located in Budi county, Eastern Equatoria State, resulting from clashes between cattle rustlers and Government forces. Militias allied with David Yau Yau allegedly burned another health centre in Pochalla County, Jonglei State.

128. As a result of inter-communal conflict, the United Nations received reports of 250 children abducted during the reporting period. The abduction of children continues to take place during cattle raiding and attacks at night where the sole aim is to abduct children.

129. The United Nations also received reports of at least 24 incidents of denial of humanitarian access, including forceful entry into humanitarian compounds, harassment and physical assault of humanitarian workers that hampered the ability of humanitarian actors to access the population in dire need of assistance.

130. As far as the latest crisis is concerned, the United Nations repeatedly advocated against the involvement of children in the ongoing conflict, and was in the process of collecting and verifying information of violations against children since the beginning of the crisis. Discussions between the United Nations and all parties were ongoing in that regard. I commend all efforts taken by the Security Council, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and other regional actors to address the renewed escalation of conflict in South Sudan. I call upon all parties to immediately put an end to the unacceptable scale of violence against children and to ensure that perpetrators will be held accountable.

Sudan

Three areas (South Kordofan, Blue Nile State and Abyei)

131. The security situation in Blue Nile and South Kordofan remained volatile owing to continued fighting, primarily between Government forces and the Sudan

People Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N). Grave violations against children also resulted from fighting in West, South and North Kordofan between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), a coalition of SPLM-N, the Justice Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Army factions of Minni Minawi, (SLA-MM) and Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW). The security situation and access restrictions continued to have an impact on the ability of the United Nations to verify information, although access to Government-controlled areas slightly improved.

132. The United Nations recorded the recruitment and use of 42 children in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, including 2 by the SAF. Both boys, 13 and 14 years of age, were recruited in Blue Nile and remained associated with SAF at the time of reporting. Of the 40 children recruited and used by armed groups, 14 children, all boys, some as young as 12, were recruited by the Popular Defence Force (PDF) in Blue Nile (5 boys) and South Kordofan (9). At least 26 children (19 boys and 7 girls) were recruited and used by SPLM-N, including 10 (5 boys and 5 girls), as young as 12, escaping from an SPLM-N camp in Mandi, South Kordofan. Sixteen children (14 boys and 2 girls) were recruited by SPLM-N in Upper Nile State, South Sudan. Three of the children reported to have received military training in Blue Nile after having been recruited in South Sudan in April. The cases confirm previous allegations about the cross-border recruitment of children between South Sudan and the Sudan.

133. At least six children were killed in clashes, including between SAF and SRF, and between SPLM-N and the Central Reserve Police (CRP). In addition, 10 children were injured in mortar attacks by CRP (3) and SPLM-N (7). Furthermore, unexploded ordnance-related incidents resulted in at least six children being injured in Blue Nile, and six children reportedly killed and nine others injured in a single incident in Um Baraka, South Kordofan.

134. Sexual violence against children in the three areas continued to be underreported in 2013 owing to limited monitoring capacity and victims' fear of stigmatization. The United Nations documented the rape of three girls, between 14 and 17 years of age, by pro-Government militias in two separate incidents in Abu Zabad, South Kordofan, on 19 November.

135. In the only documented attack on a school, on 19 November 2013, a mortar shell by SPLM-N hit the yard of El Manar primary school for boys in Kadugli, South Kordofan, injuring a 10-year-old boy.

136. Access to Abyei via Kadugli, South Kordofan, was for the first time granted in September, but was quickly disrupted owing to intensified fighting between SAF and SPLM-N. No humanitarian access has been allowed in the non-Government controlled areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan since the conflict broke out in 2011.

137. The United Nations organized child protection training and orientation for 131 SAF and PDF officers. Nine children released by PDF in Abugibaiha, Talodi, and Kalogi, South Kordofan, and the 10 children who fled from the SPLM-N camp in Mandi, were reintegrated with support from the United Nations. Although the SPLM-N had expressed its intention to enter into dialogue with the United Nations to address grave violations against children in 2012, lack of access didn't allow any follow-up.

Darfur

138. The security situation in Darfur deteriorated owing to sporadic clashes between Government forces and armed groups as well as due to inter-communal and tribal clashes, including over natural resources. The increased mobilization and arming of children by communities further exacerbated the risk of the re-recruitment of demobilized children. The United Nations, in conducting monitoring in conjunction with the African Union through the United Nations Assistance Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), was able to verify four cases of recruitment by SAF and 14 by border guards, and received reports of 17 children allegedly recruited by SAF, border guards and SLA-AW. Challenges in monitoring and reporting in areas beyond Government control clearly limited the documentation and verification of child recruitment in Darfur.

139. The United Nations documented the killing of 91 children (71 boys and 20 girls) and injury to 98 others (64 boys and 34 girls). Forty-three children were shot and killed and 32 others injured during clashes between Government forces and armed groups as well as during inter- and intra-ethnic fighting. At least 31 children were killed and 14 others injured in SAF air strikes. Incidents involving explosive remnants of war also continued to be a major concern, killing 17 children and injuring 52 others.

140. At least 62 girls were raped in 40 separate incidents. Most cases were perpetrated by unknown armed elements, some of whom were wearing military uniforms. However, in three cases alleged perpetrators were identified as Government forces and, in one case, elements of SLA-MM. Government Police arrested a member of the Central Reserve Police for the rape of a 6-year-old girl on 17 October, and two Government Police officers were identified among the six men raping a 16-year-old girl on 5 February near the Al Meglis area of El Geneina, West Darfur. Sexual violence remained underreported owing to fear of stigmatization and reprisals by perpetrators as well as out-of-court settlements.

141. In three SAF air strikes on three schools in Dursa village, Central Darfur, in Um Dadeti, South Darfur, and in Tabit, North Darfur, all three schools sustained major damage and six schoolchildren were injured. In addition, between 15 and 17 April, unknown armed elements looted schools in Labado, East Darfur, following fighting between SAF and SLA-MM.

142. Fifteen cases of abduction of children were documented in Donkey Dreisa and in Hamada forest, South Darfur (12 cases), Labado and Muhajeria, East Darfur (2), and in Jabel Amer, West Darfur (1). For instance, in Labado and Muhajeria, a 15-year-old girl was abducted by pro-Government militia along with her 18-year-old sister, was used as a porter and was raped before being released.

143. The Government of the Sudan took some positive steps to end the recruitment and use of children. On 21 July, the Government enacted a law raising the age of recruitment into PDF from 16 to 18 years and establishing 18 as the minimum age for joining the national reserve service and the national service. I am encouraged by the ongoing discussions between the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan with a view of finalizing a draft action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children. Progress was also made on dialogue with JEM/Jibril Ibrahim, SLA-MM and SLA-AW, which issued command orders prohibiting child recruitment within their ranks, and with Sheik Musa Hilal, who

issued a similar order to nomadic communities under his leadership. Furthermore, 405 children formerly associated with armed groups and forces, including with the disbanded SLA-Historical Leadership, received reintegration support.

Syrian Arab Republic

144. The conflict and violence in the Syrian Arab Republic reached unprecedented levels during 2013. Intense bombardments by Government forces on opposition-controlled or disputed areas, increased operations by a growing number of armed groups in constantly evolving coalitions as well as the expansion of the control of Islamist groups in northern Syrian Arab Republic led to massive grave violations against children. Hundreds of civilians, including many children, were killed during the chemical attack on Damascus suburbs in August.

145. Numerous armed groups are reportedly recruiting and using children in the Syrian Arab Republic, including several FSA-affiliated groups, the Kurdish People Protection Units (YPG), Ahrar al-Sham, Islamic State in Iraq and Sham (ISIS), Jhabat al-Nusra, and other armed groups. All of the groups actively recruit and use children for logistics, handling ammunition, manning checkpoints and as combatants. Reports indicated that the recruitment of children or pressure to join armed groups also occur among refugee populations in neighbouring countries. Most children associated with FSA-affiliated groups, as young as 14 years of age, indicated that they had received weapons training and 4,000 to 8,000 Syrian pounds pay per month. For instance, a 14-year-old boy who joined the al-Murabiteen battalion of the Falloujat Houran FSA brigade in Bosra al-Sham, Dara'a Governorate, reportedly received a 15 days of weapons training in al-Lajat valley close to Bosra al-Sham. In June 2013, two brothers, 16 and 17 years old, joined the FSA-affiliated Majd al-Islam brigade in Dara'a, where they cleaned weapons and performed security duties. YPG reportedly trained children with adults near Al-Qamishli, al-Hassakeh governorate and used them at checkpoints and in combat. For instance, a 14-year-old boy reportedly recruited in September 2013 was trained in Rassalein, al-Hassakeh governorate, and used in hostilities. Islamist groups such as ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra or Ahrar al-Sham also recruited and used children. A 15-year-old boy reportedly joined Ahrar al-Sham in Mayadin, Deir ez-Zor governorate, in March 2013 and continued to be associated with the group at the time of reporting. A 16-year-old boy reportedly joined Jabhat al-Nusra around April 2013 and stayed with the group for three months. ISIS reportedly used children as young as eight in hostilities. Children fighting with ISIS are reportedly paid like adults (35,000 Syrian pounds, approximately $200) and undergo both weapons and jihadist indoctrination training.

146. Adults and children released from detention reported that children were still present in detention facilities and suffered treatment tantamount to torture. For instance, a 17-year-old boy accused of participating in anti-Government demonstrations was arrested by Government forces in March 2013, detained in Homs, and subsequently for three months in the Damascus Political Security Detention Centre, where he was repeatedly beaten and forced to remain in stress positions. The boy reported that other children were present in the detention centre. Children were also reportedly arrested and detained in October 2013 during the temporary evacuation of over 1,000 civilians from al-Moaddamiyeh besieged area in Rif Damascus. The Government stated that no children were detained during the evacuation. Several cases of arrest or detention may amount to enforced

disappearances. For instance, the whereabouts of two boys, 16 and 17 years old, reportedly detained by the Syrian Air Force Intelligence in Aleppo in May and June 2013 for alleged cooperation with the opposition remained unknown at the time of reporting. Approximately 1,500 detainees, including children, are reportedly held in the ISIS main detention centre in al-Raqqah. No disaggregated data on children was available. According to the Government, all detained children under 18 are prosecuted in accordance with juvenile law. In addition, the Government states that numerous amnesty decrees have been issued.

147. More than 10,000 children are estimated to have been killed since the outset of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and the killing and maiming of children has increased exponentially in 2013. Government forces continued to indiscriminately shell civilian-populated areas, in particular in Homs and Aleppo, but also in Deir ez-Zor, Idlib, Damascus and Al-Raqqa governorates. The use of barrel bombs by Government forces in Aleppo city in December alone led to hundreds of children killed and injured. Children also continued to be killed in ground offensives by Government forces. On 29 January, during the "Al-Queiq river" massacre in Bustan al-Qasr district of Aleppo, at least 10 children were reportedly among those summarily executed. Other massacres were reportedly committed by Government forces in several villages in the Al-Sfera area, south of Aleppo, between April and June. For instance, on 21 June, in Mazrat al Rahib village, at least three children were reportedly summarily executed along with at least 58 men. In early May, a high number of children were reportedly among the hundreds of civilians killed and burned by Government forces in Ras al-Nabaa district of Baniyas town and al-Bayda village.

148. Armed groups also continued to kill and maim children, including through the use of terror tactics and during ground operations throughout the Syrian Arab Republic. For instance, during Eid al-Fitr in July, at least 13 children were killed in a mortar shelling on areas of Zahra, besieged by Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham and ISIS/Land Liwa al-Tawhid. On 4 August, the end of Ramadan, armed groups, including Ahrar al-Sham, ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra, Jaish al Muhajireen wal-Ansar and Suquor al-izz, allegedly killed more than 200 persons, of whom at least 18 were children, including during executions of entire families in Latakia governorate during the "Barouda" offensive. On 10 September, Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham allegedly attacked villages in eastern Homs, killing more than 30 civilians of which half were women and children.

149. While sexual violence against boys and girls in Government-controlled detention facilities has been documented previously, an increasing number of women and girls reported to the United Nations that they were subject to repeated sexual harassment at Government checkpoints. Government forces also reportedly abducted young women and girls in groups at checkpoints or in transport and released them a few days later in their village, intentionally exposing them as victims of rape and subjecting them to rejection by their families. Allegations of sexual violence against boys and girls by Jabhat al-Nusra and other unidentified armed groups were also received. For example, a boy of unknown age and his father were allegedly raped by several members of Jabhat al-Nusra. In another incident, a 15-year-old girl in Al Qoseir was reportedly gang-raped by unidentified armed elements and subsequently killed by family members for "having lost her sanity" following the event. The general fear of sexual violence by parties to the conflict continued to be stated as a reason for which Syrian families flee the country.

150. An increasing number of mosques hosting schools have reportedly been shelled during indiscriminate bombardments or directly targeted by missiles. For instance, on 30 July, Government forces shelled the Hamza mosque, recognized as a girls' school, in Anadan area, north of Aleppo. Nine girls, all younger than 10 years of age, and four female teachers were reportedly killed. ISIS control of school curricula, forcing teachers to introduce their ideology, was a growing concern. According to the Government, armed groups systematically targeted schools, with more than 3,000 being partially or completely destroyed. Hospitals and field clinics also continued to be damaged in targeted and indiscriminate shelling. For instance, in early November, in al-Bab district of Aleppo, Government forces shelled an opposition-run hospital twice, reportedly killing one doctor and two nurses. In March, an FSA brigade attacked the national hospital in Dara'a. According to the Government, 63 hospitals and 470 health centres have been targeted by armed groups. Doctors and medical personnel have also been killed or abducted for ransom by ISIS in northern Syrian Arab Republic. For instance, the whereabouts of two doctors reportedly arrested by ISIS in mid-December 2013 remained unknown at the time of reporting. As at March 2014, 68 of 118 UNRWA schools have been closed owing to conflict. Of 67,000 Palestine refugee children registered in UNRWA schools, 41,500 are currently attending classes. Fourteen UNRWA schools operated as shelters for displaced Palestine refugees and Syrians.

151. The abduction of civilians, including children, became an increasingly prevalent feature of the Syrian conflict, mainly committed by ISIS, Jabhat al-Nusra or Ahrar al-Sham. Allegations of mass abductions, sometimes followed by summary executions, including against minority communities, were also received. For instance, a 16-year-old boy was reportedly executed after a month and a half in the custody of Ahrar al-Sham. Approximately 50 children were also reportedly among the 200 persons abducted by several armed groups during the "Barouda" offensive, in August 2013 in Latakia governorate.

152. Active denial or intentional restriction of humanitarian access by all parties to the conflict remained a serious concern. As at 9 January 2014, 242,000 people were estimated to be living in besieged areas. Homs Old City, Darayya, al-Yarmouk Palestinian camp, Moadamiya al-Sham, Eastern Ghouta, including Douma, Arbin, Zamalka and Kafr Batna, were besieged by Government forces. Other localities, like Zahra and Nubul, were besieged by a coalition of Liwa al Tawhid, Ahrar al-Sham, ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra. All besieged areas were cut off from all humanitarian assistance for months in 2013. Increasing reports were received of civilians, including children, dying in areas under siege. In addition, humanitarian access to areas controlled by extremist groups, in particular by ISIS in northern Syrian Arab Republic, was severely impeded and the seizure of goods, as well as abduction and killing of humanitarian personnel was a repeated concern.

153. My Special Representative visited the Syrian Arab Republic and neighbouring countries to assess the conflict's impact on children and discuss the strengthening of the monitoring of grave violations and measures to end and prevent violations by all parties. In 2013, the Government criminalized the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups, and on 23 September announced the establishment of the Inter-ministerial Committee on Children and Armed Conflict. My Special Representative also engaged with representatives of the Syrian National Coalition on their commitments in relation to the protection of children in armed conflict. I

also note the command order issued by General Command for YPG on 4 October 2013 condemning and prohibiting the recruitment of children.

Yemen

154. The reporting period was marked by the beginning of the National Dialogue Conference and by a decrease in hostilities between the Government and Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)/Ansar al-Sharia. The security situation remained volatile in the South, due to the activities of the secession movement led by Al-Hirak, opposing the Transitional Government and the Conference. In August 2013, tensions resurfaced between the Salafists and the Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah in the North, resulting in the siege of Dammaj, Sa'ada governorate, by Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah.

155. The United Nations verified the recruitment of 106 children, all boys between 6 and 17 years of age. The Salafists recruited 57 boys to fight against the Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah in Dammaj, Sa'ada governorate. Children were mainly recruited during recruitment drives in mosques and marketplaces in the southern governorates of Abyan, Aden, Al Dhale, Amran, and Lahj and, in a few cases, received military training. While 22 of the 57 boys were pulled out by family members and returned home, at least 2 were killed in combat and 2 remained in Dammaj at the time of reporting. Thirty-two boys were observed manning Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah checkpoints, carrying firearms and inspecting vehicles in Sa'ada and Amran governorates. One boy, 11 years old, reported having received two months of military and ideological training. Reluctance of victims' families to expose themselves by reporting on violations by the Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah remained a challenge to monitoring. Finally, 14 children were recruited by AQAP/Ansar al-Sharia in Abyan governorate and three boys were used by the Al-Islah party and the Popular Committee, a locally rooted resistance group, which aligned with the Government to fight AQAP/Ansar al-Sharia in Abyan. In addition, 10 children recruited prior to the reporting period, including due to falsified identity documents, continued to be used in support roles by the Yemeni Armed Forces in 2013.

156. Nine boys were arbitrarily detained by the Popular Committee for alleged association with AQAP/Ansar al-Sharia in 2013. After the Government regained control over Abyan in June 2012, the Popular Committee served as a de facto police force, "arresting" and "rehabilitating" suspected AQAP/Ansar al-Sharia elements, including children.

157. At least 36 children were killed and 154 others maimed. Child casualties occurred mainly in the governorate of Sa'ada, but also in 12 other governorates throughout Yemen. Most child casualties resulted from gunshots (17 killed and 63 injured) and shelling (10 killed and 56 injured) during clashes between armed groups and between armed groups and Government forces. For example, since August, the clashes in Dammaj between Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah and the Salafists resulted in at least 20 child casualties. At least five children were injured in attacks using terror tactics, including incidents involving improvised explosive devices and one suicide attack. Another 20 child casualties were attributed to the "civil disobedience movement" initiated by Al-Hirak in southern Yemen and at least 10 children were injured in clashes between armed tribes. Explosive remnants of war continued to pose a threat to children, killing and maiming at least 28 in 2013, including in Abyan, Sa'ada, and Aden governorates. Finally, on 9 June, one boy was killed in a drone attack in Al-Jawf.

158. Thirty-five attacks on schools, on protected personnel, or threats against protected personnel were documented in 2013. For example, on 27 December, the national armed forces shelled a school where a funeral was held, resulting in more than 30 casualties, including 2 boys killed and 10 boys injured. Four attacks on schools in Amran, for example the damage to Aisha primary school in crossfire, resulted from clashes between Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah and the Salafists. Al-Hirak was responsible for the majority of documented incidents, in particular threats against protected personnel. For instance, Shamsan school, in Aden governorate, was forcibly entered by Al-Hirak youth groups, destroying the gate, and demanding closure of the school and support for the civil disobedience movement. In a separate incident, in Sa'ada governorate, a timed improvised explosive device was detected inside a school and detonated safely.

159. The United Nations documented the military use of four schools by both Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah and the Salafists, including as military barracks and during clashes in Sa'ada, Amran and Aden governorates, resulting in the closure of the schools since October 2013. One school in Amran was used by the national armed forces as barracks from 19 January to 1 March 2013. Also in Amran, four schools were used and destroyed by armed elements of the Al-Osimat and Qaflat Uthar tribes.

160. Six attacks on hospitals and protected personnel were documented, including the partial destruction of four hospitals during a complex attack by AQAP/Ansar al-Sharia on 5 December in Sana'a, resulting in the death of 57 people and injury to 186 others. Two hospitals were partially destroyed in crossfire between Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah and the Salafists. Government forces were responsible for damage to a hospital and attacks on protected personnel in the context of dispersing Al-Hirak elements in Al Dhale'e and Hadramaut governorates.

161. Twenty-two incidents of denial of humanitarian access and attacks on humanitarian personnel were verified, mainly attributed to unknown armed groups and, in some cases, to Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah and Government forces. Of particular concern was the abduction of 11 humanitarian personnel in seven incidents. Two United Nations staff remained abducted at the time of reporting. From October to November, humanitarian access to Dammaj and three IDP camps was denied by Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah during clashes with the Salafists.

162. Following the visit of my Special Representative in November 2012 and the Government's commitment to address grave violations against children in Yemen, dialogue on an action plan to end and prevent the recruitment of children by the national armed forces continued in 2013. On 1 January, the Government established an interministerial committee, which, by July, had developed and endorsed a draft action plan. At the time of reporting, despite its adoption by the Cabinet on 4 September 2013, the action plan was pending signature owing to ongoing discussions regarding monitoring access. Meanwhile, the United Nations continued to promote relevant legal reforms and advocated, in the context of the National Dialogue Conference, for 18 as the minimum age for recruitment. In October, an implementation plan to accelerate birth registration was launched by the Government, addressing an existing loophole in recruitment mechanisms. Furthermore, the United Nations continued to engage in dialogue with Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah at the time of reporting based on a draft action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children.

B. Situations not on the agenda of the Security Council or other situations

Colombia

163. Following the signing of the "General Agreement for the end of the conflict and the construction of a stable and lasting peace" in August 2012, ongoing talks between the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) and the Government of Colombia achieved important progress on the issues of rural development and political participation. While the issue of children and armed conflict was not included in the agenda, both the third item, on "End of the conflict", and the fifth item, on "Victims", constitute opportunities to take into account child protection concerns. This is a positive development, I commend the ongoing efforts in the context of the peace talks and encourage the parties to continue to work in this direction towards a political solution. Furthermore, in the context of the peace talks, the Colombian Vice-President has specifically called on FARC-EP to respect minimum humanitarian standards, including by releasing children associated with them and by ending recruitment and use.

164. Hostilities between FARC-EP, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and the Colombian Armed Forces intensified in particular in the departments of Cauca, Choco, Nariño, Antioquia, Arauca, Santander and Putumayo. Extensive displacement triggered by such hostilities continued to increase children's vulnerability, especially those of Afro-Colombian and indigenous origin. At least 110,000 people suffered from severe mobility restrictions in 2013, mostly as a result of hostilities but also confinement, contamination by explosive remnants of war, and security restrictions imposed by armed groups having an impact on access to humanitarian assistance and basic services. By the end of December, at least 24,862 people remained confined in 10 departments, with indigenous and Afro-Colombian people affected disproportionally.

165. Although the recruitment and use of children remained underreported in Colombia, the United Nations verified 81 cases of recruitment and use of children by armed groups in 25 departments and in Bogotá, including 58 children by FARC-EP and 17 by ELN. In July 2013, eight cases of recruitment of indigenous children by FARC-EP were documented in the department of Cauca. In December, in Antioquia, a 15-year-old boy was recruited by FARC-EP during a declared ceasefire. Furthermore, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute documented 342 children (114 girls and 228 boys) separated from armed groups in 2013, marking a significant increase, compared with 264 children separated in 2012. Among these children, 261 had been recruited by FARC-EP, 65 by ELN, 15 by armed groups that emerged after the demobilization of the paramilitary group Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, and 1 by the Ejército Popular de Liberación.

166. At least 43 children were killed and 83 maimed during attacks by armed groups. Four children were killed and 10 maimed in clashes between armed groups or between the national armed forces and armed groups. For example, in August, a 14-year-old boy was killed in crossfire when FARC-EP attacked a police station in Putumayo. Furthermore, 11 children were killed and 28 maimed by anti-personnel mines or explosive remnants of war.

167. While underreported, girls and boys continued to be victims of sexual violence attributed to members of armed groups and in some cases by the national armed

forces. Between January and October 2013, five cases of sexual violence against children by armed groups and 17 cases (two boys and 15 girls) by the national armed forces were referred to the National Institute of Forensics. Furthermore, information gathered by the United Nations and the Colombian Ombudsman Office indicate a pattern of sexual exploitation and abuse of girls and women in mining zones where armed groups are operating. Sexual violence also continued to be perpetrated by armed groups that emerged after the demobilization of the paramilitary groups. Since these groups are not considered actors of the armed conflict by the Government, and although children may also benefit from support by the State's Family Defenders as victims of violence, they continue to face obstacles in exercising their rights as protected under the Victims Law.

168. During 2013, the United Nations identified 26 education-related incidents resulting in damage to schools or suspension of classes. For example, in April 2013, a school in Arauca used as shelter by FARC-EP was damaged during clashes between the armed group and the national armed forces. In February 2013, the national armed forces used a school for military purposes while fighting against FARC-EP in Putumayo, putting school premises and children at risk often resulting in the suspension of classes. In November, during an armed lockdown by FARC-EP in Antioquia, at least six schools were closed, affecting approximately 3,000 children. Teachers continued to be targeted, with five teachers reportedly killed by unidentified armed groups and others subject to threats by armed groups in six different departments. The involvement of children in several civic-military activities by the Ministry of Defense and the national armed forces, prohibited by the Child Protection Code (Law 1098 of 2006), was reported in several departments.

169. The Government of Colombia has voluntarily accepted the monitoring and reporting mechanism pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) on the condition that any dialogue between the United Nations and armed groups would take place with its consent. Constructive dialogue between the Government and the United Nations system, both at the political and technical levels, is ongoing. The establishment and implementation of policies to protect children from recruitment such as the Presidential Human Rights Programme is an encouraging development to ensure the protection of children affected by the conflict in Colombia.

170. A total of 342 children who had been separated from armed groups were referred to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute. Some children, in particular those separated from the armed groups formed after the demobilization of paramilitary organizations, were referred to the Attorney General's Office for prosecution in accordance with the Law on Childhood and Adolescence (8 November 2006) (Codigo de la Infancia y Adolescencia, Ley 1098). However, the children continued to face difficulties in benefitting from the same rights and protection as children recruited by other armed groups. All children, as victims, should be accorded the same benefits and protection, regardless of the group that recruited or used them.

171. The number of prosecutions for violations against children and information on cases taken up by the Office of the Attorney General remained limited. While the Colombian Family Welfare Institute attended to at least 5,417 children separated since 1999 from armed groups, to date there have been 69 convictions for child recruitment, including 5 under the Justice and Peace Law of 2005 (of which 2 in 2013), and 64 by the Human Rights Unit of the Office of the Attorney General (of which 14 in 2013). Additionally, there have been convictions by regional offices of

the Attorney General. Despite such efforts, children continued to face difficulties in gaining access to justice, and impunity for violations against children remains a concern.

India

172. The recruitment and use of children, as young as 6 years of age, by Maoist armed groups in India, also known as Naxalites, continued in 2013. Although no disaggregated data on the number of children associated with armed groups in India was available to the United Nations, independent estimates indicate that at least 2,500 children are associated with armed groups in Naxal-affected areas. Notably, Naxalite recruitment also continued to affect girls and women. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, boys and girls between 6 and 12 years of age were recruited into specific children's units (called *bal dasta* and *bal sangham*) in Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha States. The children were used as spies and for fighting with crude weapons, such as sticks. At the age of 12, children associated with Naxalites are reportedly transferred to age-specific units and receive military training in weapons handling and the use of improvised explosive devices. According to Government sources, children also continued to be placed in front of combat units as human shields. In Naxalite recruitment campaigns, targeting poor communities, parents are forced to offer boys and girls to the armed groups under the threat of violence, including killing and torture. Similarly, children are reportedly threatened with the killing of family members should they escape or surrender to security forces.

173. The recruitment and use of children remains to be criminalized by law. Of particular concern were several reports on the treatment of children allegedly associated with armed groups. As the Indian National Commission for Protection of Child Rights stated in its "Protocols for police and armed forces in contact with children in areas of civil unrest", children arrested under security legislation are often detained with adults, not tried through the juvenile justice system and deprived of their right to due process of law.

174. Although no disaggregated data on children killed or maimed in clashes between Maoist armed groups and Government security forces were available, at least 257 civilians, 101 security forces elements and 97 Naxalite members were killed in 2013 in 998 incidents. Taking into account the use of children as human shields by the Naxalites, the United Nations is concerned about the killing and maiming of children in hostilities.

175. The reported presence of girls within Naxalite ranks also raises concerns regarding sexual violence against children. According to the Government, based on statements of several women formerly associated with Naxalite groups, sexual violence, including rape and other forms of abuse, is a practice in some Naxalite camps.

176. Attacks on schools by Naxalites have continued to affect access by children to education in affected areas. Three schools were reportedly attacked by Naxalites in 2013. For example, on 15 June, up to 50 Naxalite fighters attacked and blew up a middle school in Bhulsumia village, Bihar. In that regard, continued reports on the military use of schools as barracks and bases or the deployment of Government security forces in the vicinity of schools remained a concern. For example, in an incident in Latehar district, Jharkhand, on 16 March, approximately 20 Naxalite

fighters reportedly attacked a school, beat up teachers and destroyed a boundary wall under construction. Last, according to some reports, schools in Chhattisgarh were also used for the recruitment of schoolchildren by armed groups.

Nigeria

177. Conflict in the north-eastern region of Nigeria has resulted in serious violations against children. Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, also known as Boko Haram,[2] was created in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital of the north-eastern Borno State. Its objective is to overthrow the Government and create an Islamic State governed by sharia law. Since July 2009, the extremist group has been carrying out targeted attacks against police, religious leaders, politicians, and public and international institutions, including a suicide attack on a United Nations building in Abuja in 2011, and indiscriminately killing civilians, including children.

178. The security and humanitarian situation in the north-eastern region deteriorated throughout 2013. The activities of Boko Haram and the military response have led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people within Nigeria and to neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and the Niger. A joint humanitarian assessment mission in September by the Nigerian authorities (National Emergency Management Agency), the United Nations and the Nigerian Red Cross, estimates that about 5.9 of the 11 million Nigerians who live in the north-eastern states have been affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, including 4 million in Borno State.

179. Humanitarian access to affected communities and for monitoring and verifying incidents of grave violations against children has become increasingly difficult, in particular since the closure of Maiduguri airport following an attack by Boko Haram in December 2013. Between May and December 2013 alone, at least 1,200 people were killed in 48 Boko Haram-related attacks in the States of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe.

180 The United Nations received reports of the recruitment and use of children as young as 12 by Boko Haram. Children are allegedly used for intelligence purposes, tracking movements of the security forces, transporting guns and taking part in attacks, including the burning of schools and churches.

181. Hundreds of children were killed or maimed by Boko Haram in bomb and gun attacks against anyone who supported democracy or so-called Western values. In September alone, 491 persons were killed in nine attacks, including an unknown number of children. For example, on 17 September 2013, Boko Haram attacked Benisheikh, killing at least 161 people, mainly civilians.

182. Of particular concern were the targeted attacks on schools by Boko Haram, which were on the increase in Yobe and Borno States since October 2012 and throughout 2013, resulting in the killing of at least 100 children and 70 teachers. For example, in March 2013, at least 11 schools in Borno State were attacked resulting in the killing of at least seven teachers and three children. In June, two secondary schools were attacked in Yobe and Borno States, resulting in the killing of seven schoolchildren and two teachers in Yobe and eight boys and two girls in Borno. In July, a Boko Haram leader, Abubakar Shekau, publicly stated that they would burn

[2] *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad* in Arabic means "people committed to propagating the Prophet's teachings and jihad". It is also known as Boko Haram, which means "Western education is a sin" in local Hausa language.

schools and kill teachers and the group claimed responsibility for an attack on 6 July on a secondary school in Mamudo, Yobe State, killing at least 29 children and one teacher, some of them burned alive. Also in July, a government secondary school in Yobe State was attacked by armed elements at night while the schoolchildren were sleeping. Sections of the school and dormitory were set ablaze and escaping students were shot. The reported number of casualties ranged between 18 and 42. In the most fatal attack on children in 2013, on 29 September, Boko Haram elements entered and opened fire in the male dormitory at the College of Agriculture in Gujba, Yobe State, killing 65 students and wounding 18 others.

183. Boko Haram also targeted and killed education and medical personnel. For example, on 9 April, suspected Boko Haram members killed four officials of the Borno State Feeding Committee, which runs a primary and secondary school feeding programme, while they were on an inspection tour of schools in Dikwa town, Borno State. In February, three foreign doctors were reportedly killed in Potiskum and 10 female health workers were killed in attacks on polio vaccination centres in Kano.

184. The escalating violence and recurrent attacks on schools severely disrupted the right of children to education, with 15,000 children in Borno State reportedly having to stop attending schools between February and May 2013. The health-care system in Borno State has also reportedly collapsed, with most medical personnel fleeing in fear of being attacked by Boko Haram. These trends of attacks on schools and the killing and maiming of children continued in early 2014. For instance, on 25 February 2014, 59 schoolchildren in the College of Buni Yadi, a secondary school in Yobe State in north-east Nigeria, were reportedly shot or burned alive.

185. The Government of Nigeria responded to the threat posed by Boko Haram with the deployment of a joint task force comprising military, police, immigration and intelligence officers in June 2011. In May 2013, the Government declared a state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States, following which armed clashes between the joint task force and Boko Haram escalated in the context of the joint task force counter-insurgency operations. The United Nations received reports of 14 children in Borno State, between 9 and 13 years of age, and 21 children in Yobe State who had been reportedly arrested in the context of such operations. The United Nations welcomes their release in May 2013 as part of the amnesty programme announced by the Government and calls on the Government to do its utmost to uphold its obligations to prevent the arbitrary arrest and detention of children and to ensure respect for the fundamental principles of the right to a fair trial, including in the context of a State emergency and of the ongoing counter-insurgency operations.

186. Furthermore, vigilante groups, commonly referred to as the "Civilian joint task force", which emerged to protect their communities from Boko Haram, progressively armed themselves with machetes and guns, and were observed manning checkpoints in support of the joint task force. According to the Government, the "Civilian joint task force" is not part of the Government forces and the activities of the groups are of concern since they operate outside of the rule of law, chain of command and accountability of the security forces.

187. The United Nations has denounced the attacks in north-eastern Nigeria and has called upon the authorities to launch prompt and thorough investigations to hold perpetrators accountable. The United Nations also takes note of the commitment of Nigeria to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law, to protect the

rights of children and to protect children from conflict-related violence, including through its existing national legislation and policies. I urge the Nigerian authorities to continue to support the independent National Human Rights Commission to implement its far-reaching and robust mandate to monitor and report on grave violations in the affected areas. I welcome the Government's commitment to help to facilitate access for human rights monitors and humanitarian actors to the north-east.

Pakistan

188. The recruitment of children by armed groups in Pakistan, including reportedly for use as suicide bombers and bomb planters, remained a grave concern in 2013. For example, in March, the police arrested 11 children, between 10 and 17 years of age, who were allegedly used by the United Baloch Army to plant improvised explosive devices. All the children were held in the government of Balochistan security facility awaiting trial at the time of reporting. No exact figures could be established on the number of children used by armed groups, in particular in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. However, on 24 October, 21 children, between 7 and 12 years of age, allegedly proceeding to Pakistan for military training by the Taliban were detained by Afghan security forces in Nuristan Province. The Taliban rejected those allegations.

189. Although exact figures of child casualties were not always available in 2013, improvised explosive device blasts were reported to have killed at least 18 children and injured 76 others, particularly in the Provinces of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. For example, a twin suicide attack on 22 September at the All Saints Church in Peshawar city, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, killed 81 people, including an unknown number of children. A splinter group of the Tehrik-i-Taliban, the Tehrik-i-Taliban-Jandullah, claimed responsibility. In another attack, on 20 June 2013, a suicide bomber blew himself up at a Shia mosque in Quetta, Balochistan, followed by a remote-controlled improvised explosive device explosion after civilians and rescue workers had reached the site, killing at least 28 persons, including 3 children, and injuring 65 others. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility. On 16 February, in a suicide attack by an unknown group in a marketplace near the Hazara town of Quetta, 92 people were killed and 254 injured, including at least 45 women and 28 children. In addition, attacks by armed assailants, mainly in Balochistan and the city of Karachi, caused the death of 7 children and injured 16. Armed clashes between the security forces and armed groups and between armed groups themselves in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas resulted in the death of one child and the injury of four.

190. Targeted attacks on schools, teachers and schoolchildren have continued, mainly carried out by the Tehrik-i-Taliban and aligned local groups, with 78 attacks reported to the United Nations. The highest number of attacks on schools occurred in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (51), followed by the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (19). In one incident, on 30 March, a school principal was killed and eight students, between 5 and 10 years of age, were injured when two men on a motorcycle hurled hand grenades and opened fire in a primary school in Karachi. Twenty-six attacks targeted female educational institutions. In January 2013, armed elements reportedly killed five female teachers and two health workers returning by bus from a community project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. On 26 March, a female teacher was executed in the presence of her 13-year-old son on her way to

school by two unidentified armed elements in Khyber Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Areas. On 5 September, a bomb blast outside the Government Girls' Primary School in Bannu district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, allegedly carried out by the local Taliban, injured 13 female students below the age of 10. Several schools, in particular girls' schools, also received threats by armed groups resulting in closures. For example, on 15 April, a Taliban faction led by Hafiz Gul Bahadur threatened boys and girls if they violated his ban on five schools in Miranshah, North Waziristan. The United Nations also received reports that Pakistan security forces were using Government school buildings in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and Federally Administered Tribal Areas to launch operations against armed groups.

191. Attacks on polio workers continued, resulting in the killing of several polio workers and eight police workers providing escort. On 21 November, 11 teachers and local volunteers were abducted from a private school in Khyber Agency after polio vaccinations had taken place in the school. The abduction was allegedly carried out by the Lashkar-e-Islam group, and the victims were released after a few days unharmed. Hospitals and medical clinics were also targeted. At least four people were killed, including at least one hospital staff, and five injured in a suicide bomb attack on a hospital in Bajaur tribal area on 20 April. On 15 June, at least 25 civilians were killed and many others wounded in a coordinated attack claimed by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi on a bus with female university students and, subsequently, the Medical Complex in Quetta, where casualties of the first attack received treatment.

192. The Government took steps towards strengthening its child protection policy and legislative framework, including the approval of a Balochistan child protection policy and the vetting and submission to the Cabinet of a child protection act for Balochistan; formulation of rules of business for the Child Protection and Welfare Commission in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and for the Child Protection Authority in Sindh; and the appointment of a Child Rights Commissioner at the federal level and in all provinces of Pakistan. I encourage the Government of Pakistan to continue its efforts to better protect children. My country team in Pakistan stands ready to support the Government in this regard.

Philippines

193. Children continued to be used by all armed groups, including by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which signed an action plan with the United Nations in 2009, the New People's Party (NPA), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Abu Sayyaf and the independent MILF splinter group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF). The latter two increasingly engaged in fighting in 2013 in opposition to the peace process between the Government and MILF. For instance, at least seven boys between 14 and 17 years of age were used as combatants and porters by MNLF in their attack on Zamboanga City in September, resulting in the death of two boys. At least 150 civilians, including 13 girls and 19 boys were used as human shields in the operation. With regard to Government forces, one case of the use of a 12-year-old boy as an informant for the police was verified.

194. The United Nations remained concerned regarding the continued reports of arrest, detention and public exposure of children by the Armed Forces of the Philippines for alleged association with armed groups. In June, three internally

displaced boys from Maguindanao Province, between 16 and 17 years of age, were arrested, detained and ill-treated by elements of the national armed forces for alleged membership with BIFF. The interrogation and reported abuse took place in a nearby school building. In another case, a 14-year-old boy was arrested in Zamboanga, detained and handcuffed for almost two weeks under the allegation of being an MNLF member. Another two boys were arrested on 22 July by the national armed forces in Loreto town of Agusan del Sur Province for alleged association with NPA. Medical reports support that they were ill-treated in military custody.

195. At least 20 children (4 girls and 16 boys) were killed and 22 others injured (6 girls and 16 boys) in 33 separate incidents. Most child casualties resulted from clashes between the national armed forces and armed groups, including with MNLF in Zamboanga City in September, as well as in factional fighting within armed groups. For instance, in February and April, a series of clashes between two MILF factions in North Cotabato and Maguindanao resulted in the death of at least three boys and the injury of a 12-year-old girl. In another incident, on 3 April, an 8-year-old boy died and two more boys, between 12 and 13 years of age, were wounded in Compostela Valley Province in AFP gunfire. While the national armed forces alleged that the casualties resulted from a clash with NPA, their families denied such an incident and filed a murder case against the elements of the national armed forces.

196. Armed clashes also continued to have an impact on access by children to education in affected areas. For instance, in July, clashes between BIFF and the national armed forces resulted in the suspension of classes for 5,883 children in three municipalities of Maguindanao Province. Owing to tensions between MILF and MNLF in June, schools were closed in two villages in Matalam municipality of North Cotabato Province, affecting 398 students. In September, when MNLF clashed with the AFP in Zamboanga City, three schools were completely destroyed in fires.

197. Education and health-care personnel were also targeted by armed groups. For instance, on 23 September in Midsayap Municipality of North Cotabato Province, BIFF used the Malingao Elementary School as a defence posture, holding approximately 1,500 adults and children hostage, and abducted nine teachers in the course of their retreat. On 18 May, Abu Sayyaf abducted a medical worker from the health centre in Jolo municipality, Sulu Province.

198. On 15 July, the national armed forces issued guidelines on the conduct of activities in schools and hospitals. I am encouraged by the reported removal of some national armed forces units from schools upon advocacy by the United Nations in regular meetings with the Government's monitoring, reporting and response mechanism, and encourage continued implementation of the guidelines. Military camps in or in the vicinity of schools and health clinics affect the right of children to education and health care and put them at risk of attacks.

199. Peace talks between the Government and MILF were ongoing throughout 2013. A comprehensive peace pact towards the new Bangsamoro entity, including provisions on the demobilization of MILF forces, was signed on 27 March 2014. The United Nations continued to engage with MILF on the action plan, to which MILF signed an addendum on extension on 29 April 2013. A technical support mission conducted by the Office of my Special Representative and UNICEF in May resulted in the development of an operational plan outlining practical steps towards

action plan implementation. However, MILF had not formally responded to communications by the United Nations in the Philippines at the time of reporting. I again urge MILF to continue its collaboration with the United Nations and encourage the Government of the Philippines to continue to provide support in that regard.

Southern border provinces of Thailand

200. Despite the unprecedented announcement of a "general consensus on the peace dialogue process" between the Government of Thailand and "people who have different opinions and ideologies from the State", including the National Revolutionary Front (BRN), on 28 February 2013, armed violence continued to affect the southern border provinces of Thailand.

201. The United Nations received reports of the recruitment and use of both girls and boys as young as 14 years of age by armed groups, including BRN. The children are allegedly used mainly as informants and lookouts to track movement of the Thai security forces. Concerns also persist over the informal association of children with village defence groups (Chor Ror Bor). According to the Government, local Government officers in relevant provinces were instructed to raise awareness and monitor the implementation of regulations issued by the Government to address the concern of the informal association of children with the Chor Ror Bor. The involvement of children in armed forces and armed groups remains to be explicitly criminalized by law. Furthermore, the United Nations continued to receive worrisome information regarding the administrative detention of children for alleged association with armed groups. According to the Government, the Criminal Procedural Code and the Juvenile and Family Court and Juvenile and Family Procedure Act of 2010 are applied to child suspects in order to protect their rights and to assure orderly separation, reintegration and assistance. The United Nations looks forward to an update on the implementation of those commitments.

202. Credible sources indicate that at least 316 improvised explosive device attacks were reportedly carried out in Narathiwat, Pattani, Songkhla, and Yala Provinces, including 35 improvised explosive device attacks during the last two weeks of Ramadan. In April 2013 alone, 45 people were reportedly killed and 79 others injured in 298 incidents, including bombings and drive-by shootings. Although exact figures on child casualties were not always available, the United Nations received reports of 7 children killed and 37 injured in such incidents. For example, on 21 March 2013, a 9-year-old boy was killed and 14 people wounded when a bomb was reportedly detonated in an ice cream shop in Pattani Province. Among several reported child casualties resulting from drive-by shootings, a 2-year-old boy was severely wounded when his father was killed on 11 December 2013.

203. Armed groups continued to target schools and teachers, although the United Nations was not able to attribute them to specific parties. At least seven teachers and three education-related personnel were killed, as confirmed by the Thailand Ministry of Education. On 23 January, a teacher was executed by two gunmen in a school cafeteria in front of dozens of children, including his 7-year-old daughter, in Narathiwat Province. Classes were suspended for several days in 12 schools in Pattani Province, after the killing of a teacher in a targeted drive-by shooting in August. Schools were also affected by attacks, including by at least three improvised explosive device attacks on Government security forces deployed to

protect schools, putting schoolchildren and protected personnel further at risk. In one attack in Yala Province, on 10 September, two soldiers were killed and a 12-year-old schoolboy injured on school premises.

204. In my previous annual report, I welcomed the fact that the Government and the United Nations country team were engaging in dialogue on access to the southern border provinces to conduct independent verification and report on alleged violations against children, including through minimum operating modalities. While the Government has continued to facilitate programmatic visits, I regret that no progress has been achieved on the issue of access for monitoring and verification, and I strongly urge the Government to move forward with the country team to facilitate independent access in that regard.

IV. Recommendations

205. I am deeply concerned about the grave violations outlined in the present report and call upon all parties to immediately cease to commit, and take all measures to prevent, all grave violations against children, and to take all necessary measures to make violators accountable.

206. I strongly urge all parties listed in the annexes to the present report engaged in the recruitment and use of children, the killing and maiming of children, sexual violence against children and/or attacks on schools and hospitals or protected personnel to immediately cease all grave violations against children and to enter into dialogue with the United Nations to develop and implement action plans.

207. I welcome the positive engagement of Member States within the scope of the campaign "Children, Not Soldiers", to end the recruitment and use of children by Government security forces in conflict by 2016 and call on them to continue with determined and tangible steps with a view to finalizing the development and implementation of action plans. In that regard, I call upon the donor community to assist in addressing funding gaps for the implementation of action plans and associated activities.

208. I welcome the progress made by some non-State armed groups in releasing children or issuing commitments to better protect children, including the prohibition of child recruitment in command orders and declarations.

209. I call upon Member States to allow independent access to the United Nations for the purposes of monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children and to facilitate contact between the United Nations and non-State armed groups for dialogue, conclusion and follow-up on action plans in order to bring an end to violations, in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council on children and armed conflict. Such contact does not prejudge the political or legal status of those non-State armed groups.

210. I note with deep concern the continued attacks on and the military use of schools and the impact on children in that regard. In line with applicable international humanitarian law, and in accordance with Security Council resolution 2143 (2014), I encourage Member States to consider adopting, as a priority, additional concrete measures to deter the military use of schools.

211. I am also concerned about the detention of children in situations of armed conflict, in particular in the context of counter-terrorism activities, and call for urgent measures to address this growing and worrisome trend.

212. I welcome the leadership and important contribution of regional and subregional organizations to conflict prevention, mediation and peace support operations. I call on them to further mainstream child protection considerations in their guidance and policy development, mission planning, training of personnel and conduct of peace support operations.

213. I call upon the Council to continue to support the children and armed conflict agenda by strengthening provisions for the protection of children in all relevant mandates of United Nations peacekeeping, special political and peacebuilding missions, including the deployment of child protection advisers.

214. I call upon all Member States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three Optional Protocols. I also call upon all States parties to these instruments to fully implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

V. Lists in the annexes to the present report

215. Compared with the past year, eight new parties are included in the annexes to the present report. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, ADF, NDC/Cheka and the Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga are listed for the recruitment and use of children. NDC/Cheka are also listed for the killing and maiming of children and ADF for recurrent attacks on schools and hospitals. In South Sudan, SPLA in Opposition and the White Army are identified as perpetrators of the recruitment and use of children and the killing and maiming of children. Furthermore, SPLA has additionally been listed for the killing and maiming of children. Nigeria was introduced as a situation of concern in the present report owing to the continued, systematic attacks on schools and the killing and maiming of children by Boko Haram, which is listed for those violations. In the Central African Republic, local self-defence militias known as the anti-Balaka are listed for their widespread involvement in the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children. In addition to the new parties on the lists, FRPI in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, already listed for the recruitment and use of, and sexual violence against, children, is also listed for recurrent attacks on schools and hospitals. The Mayi Mayi Simba "Morgan", already listed for sexual violence against children, are also listed for their recruitment and use.

216. Other changes in the list resulted from the fragmentation of previously listed parties or other changes in the landscape of armed conflict in respective situations. The following are separately listed in the present report for the recruitment and use of children: BIFF, formerly part of MILF in the Philippines; pro-Government militias in Yemen, including the Salafists and the popular committees; and ASWJ in Somalia, whose factions continued to have varying degrees of relationships with the Government forces. In the Syrian Arab Republic, armed opposition groups were treated under the FSA umbrella in previous annual reports. Owing to continuously shifting alliances, the emergence of new structures and strengthened reporting, Jhabat al-Nusra, ISIS, Ahrar al-Sahm and YPG were identified as separate perpetrators of the recruitment and use of children in 2013. Jhabat al-Nusra and ISIS are also listed for the killing and maiming of children. In the Central African

Republic, the ex-Séléka, already mentioned in the annexes of my previous report, are now listed separately with associated armed groups for all four violations.

217. The Chadian armed forces were delisted from the annexes in the present report in view of full compliance with the action plan. I am looking forward to reporting on the sustainable efforts made by the Government in my report on children and armed conflict in Chad and in my next annual report. Finally, armed groups that were no longer active in 2013 and were removed from the annexes include the SLA-Historical Leadership, SLA-Mother Wing (Abu Gasim), and SLA-Unity in the Sudan; as the Mayi Mayi Tawimbi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and, the Convention patriotique pour le salut du Kodro, the Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricain pour la justice and the Union des forces républicaines in the Central African Republic.

Annex I

List of parties that recruit or use children, kill or maim children, commit rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, or engage in attacks on schools and/or hospitals in situations of armed conflict on the agenda of the Security Council*

Parties in Afghanistan

1. Afghan National Police, including the Afghan Local Police[a,*]
2. Haqqani Network[a,b]
3. Hezb-e-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar[a,b]
4. Taliban forces, including the Tora Bora Front, the Jamat Sunat al-Dawa Salafia and the Latif Mansur Network[a,b,d]

Parties in the Central African region (Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan)

Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)[a,b,c]

Parties in the Central African Republic

1. Ex-Séléka coalition and associated armed groups[a,b,c,d]
   a. Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP)*
   b. Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix fondamentale (CPJP fondamentale)
   c. Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC)
   d. Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR)*
2. Local defence militias known as the anti-Balaka[a,b]

Parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

1. Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)[a,d]
2. Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC)[a,c,*]
3. Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR)[a,c,d]
4. Front de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FRPI)[a,c,d]

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* The parties underlined have been in the annexes for at least five years and are therefore considered persistent perpetrators.
[a] Parties that recruit and use children.
[b] Parties that kill and maim children.
[c] Parties that commit rape and other forms of sexual violence against children.
[d] Parties that engage in attacks on schools and/or hospitals.
[*] This party has concluded an action plan with the United Nations in line with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005).

5. Mayi Mayi Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS) "Colonel Janvier"[a]
6. Mayi Mayi "Lafontaine" and former elements of the Patriotes résistants congolais (PARECO)[a]
7. Mayi Mayi Simba "Morgan"[a,c]
8. Mouvement du 23 mars (M23)[a,c]
9. Mayi Mayi Kata Katanga[a]
10. Nduma Defence Coalition (NDC)/Cheka[a,b]
11. Mayi Mayi Nyatura[a]

Parties in Iraq

Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)/Al-Qaida in Iraq (AQ-I)[a,b,d]

Parties in Mali

1. Mouvement national de liberation de l'Azawad (MNLA)[a,c]
2. Mouvement pour l'unicité et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO)[a,c]
3. Ansar Dine[a,c]

Parties in Myanmar

1. Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA)[a]
2. Kachin Independence Army (KIA)[a]
3. Karen National Liberation Army (KNU/KNLA)[a]
4. Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council[a]
5. Karenni Army (KNPP/KA)[a]
6. Shan State Army South (SSA-S)[a]
7. Tatmadaw Kyi, including integrated border guard forces[a,•]
8. United Wa State Army (UWSA)[a]

Parties in Somalia

1. Al Shabaab[a,b]
2. Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah (ASWJ)[a]
3. Somali National Army[a,b,•]

Parties in South Sudan

1. Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)[a,b,•]
2. Opposition armed groups, including former SPLA in opposition[a,b]
3. White Army[a]

Parties in Sudan

1. Government forces, including the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the Popular Defense Forces (PDF) and the Sudan police forces (Border Intelligence Forces and Central Reserve Police)[a]
2. Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)[a]
3. Pro-Government militias[a]
4. Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid[a]
5. Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi[a]
6. Sudan People's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N)[a]

Parties in the Syrian Arab Republic

1. Ahrar al-Sham al-Islami[a,b]
2. Free Syrian Army (FSA) — affiliated groups[a]
3. Government forces, including the National Defence Forces and the Shabbiha militia[b,c,d]
4. Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS)[a,b]
5. Jhabat Al-Nusra[a,b]
6. People Protection Units (YPG)[a]

Parties in Yemen

1. Al-Houthi/Ansar Allah[a]
2. Al-Qaida in the Arab Peninsula (AQIP)/Ansar al-Sharia[a]
3. Government forces, including the Yemeni Armed Forces, the First Armoured Division, the Military Police, the special security forces and Republican Guards[a]
4. Pro-Government militias, including the Salafists and Popular Committees[a]

Annex II

List of parties that recruit or use children, kill or maim children, commit rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, or engage in attacks on schools and/or hospitals in situations of armed conflict not on the agenda of the Security Council, or in other situations*

Parties in Colombia

1. Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)[a]
2. Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)[a]

Parties in Nigeria

1. Boko Haram[b,c]

Parties in the Philippines

1. Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)[a]
2. Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF)[a]
3. Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)[a,•]
4. New People's Army (NPA)[a]

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* The parties underlined have been in the annexes for at least five years and are therefore considered persistent perpetrators.

[a] Parties that recruit and use children.

[b] Parties that kill and maim children.

[c] Parties that engage in attacks on schools and/or hospitals.

[•] This party has concluded an action plan with the United Nations in line with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005).

United Nations A/68/879–S/2014/340

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
16 May 2014

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session
Agenda items 99 (e) and 99 (bb)

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

General and complete disarmament: transparency in armaments

General and complete disarmament: confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Letter dated 14 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the comments by the Deputy Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, Anatoly Antonov, in relation to assertions by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and officials of the United States of America on the lack of withdrawal of Russian troops from the border with Ukraine (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and the enclosed text of the comments as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 99 (e) and 99 (bb), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

14-53674 (E) 230514 230514

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 14 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Comments by Anatoly Antonov, Deputy Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation, in relation to assertions by NATO and United States officials that there have been no signs of withdrawal of Russian troops from the border with Ukraine

Moscow, 8 May 2014

In the past 24 hours, officials of NATO and the United States of America have asserted that they "have no indication of a change in the position of military forces along the Ukraine border". As is frequently the case, our NATO colleagues, and particularly our United States colleagues, have not taken the trouble to back up their claims with any kind of proof.

In this connection, we would like to add that neither the United States nor any other country in the North Atlantic alliance has so far presented the Russian Federation with a formal protest that it has failed to fulfil, or has directly violated, its international obligations regarding conventional weapons. That situation notwithstanding, our Western partners have urged us to be unilaterally transparent and to allow additional inspection missions access to the territory of the Russian Federation.

This was one of the subjects covered in a recent telephone conversation between the Ministers of Defence of the Russian Federation and the United States. During that conversation, Army General Sergei Shoigu informed his counterpart that, following exercises in the region of the Ukrainian border in late April, Russian units had been withdrawn to their permanent positions.

We wish to point out that, in compliance with the Treaty on Open Skies and the Vienna Document 2011, we have in the last two months assisted in the conduct of a dozen inspections, including an extraordinary observation flight conducted by Ukraine over the border area of the Russian Federation.

Moreover, on 6 May 2014, a United States-Norway Open Skies group conducted a routine observation flight along the border with the Ukrainian provinces of Kharkov and Lugansk. On 7 May it flew over the area south of Bryansk, along the territory bordering the towns of Glukhov and Sumy. The Russian Federation in no way obstructed the choice of the flight route, and no undeclared military activity whatsoever was detected in these areas.

When Russian officials are present, official minutes give one version of events, but the public is then fed conflicting, formulaic, propaganda-like information accusing Russia of violating its obligations.

In the interests of preventing further provocation, we have withdrawn from the border even tactical units which were conducting drills at their training facilities. The Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation informed his United States colleague of this during their telephone conversation.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces have continued to mass on the Russia-Ukraine border, where there is a 15,000-strong concentration of Ukrainian troops. Conscription has been restored.

There has been a simultaneous build-up of NATO forces in Eastern Europe.

Against the background of continuing crisis in Ukraine, such actions are hardly conducive to the de-escalation of tensions in that country.

We call on NATO and Pentagon officials to refrain from cynically misleading the international community regarding the real situation along the Russia-Ukraine border.

Persistently feeding Western society twentieth-century cold-war stereotypes in this modern era, when the Internet has a universal reach and the media are free, is pointless and can only harm the reputation of the Western "propagandists" themselves.

United Nations A/68/880–S/2014/353

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
20 May 2014

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session
Agenda items 110, 118 and 119

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Identical letters dated 16 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to write to you with regard to a letter from the Permanent Representatives of Austria, Belgium, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden and myself, addressed to the President of the Security Council on 17 April 2014, and would like to request its circulation, along with the enclosed discussion paper, entitled "Improving fair and clear procedures for a more effective United Nations sanctions system", as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 110, 118 and 119, and of the Security Council.* The paper will serve the broad interest of the United Nations Member States as it presents proposals on improving fair and clear procedures for a more effective United Nations sanctions system.

(*Signed*) Paul **Seger**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* See S/2014/286.

14-53755 (E) 270514

Please recycle

United Nations A/68/881–S/2014/352

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
19 May 2014

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 42
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Letter dated 15 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I enclose herewith two separate annexes recording the infringements of international air traffic regulations and violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey (annex I) and the illegal use of closed ports by Turkish warships during the month of April 2014 (annex II). It should also be noted that Turkish commercial aircraft systematically use the illegal Tympou airport. I have the honour to draw your attention to the systematic infringements by Turkey of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus through blatant violations of international law, in a way that seriously jeopardizes safety and security in the greater region.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 42, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nicholas **Emiliou**

14-53653 (E) 280514

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Annex I to the letter dated 15 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Airborne violations

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
1 April 2014	1022-1120	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia flight information region (FIR) and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia area control centre (ACC).
	1322-1517	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1449-1625	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
2 April 2014	1006-1025	One C-130 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1006-1120	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1022-1041	One C-160 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1026-1044	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1128-1148	One B-200 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1401-1419	One B-200 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
3 April 2014	1307-1549	Two F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
3 April 2014	1403-1413	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
5 April 2014	1557-1622	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
	1605-1624	One C-130 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
	1609-1629	One C-160 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
7 April 2014	1218-1354	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
9 April 2014	0940-1050	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1338-1435	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1541-1625	Six F-4 and 24 F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
10 April 2014	0952-1215	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
13 April 2014	0926-0943	One C-160 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	0938-0958	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
14 April 2014	1800-1934	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
15 April 2014	1506-1533	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1536-1554	One C-160 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
	1540-1600	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
	1552-1612	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
16 April 2014	2036-2148	Two F-4 and 21 F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
17 April 2014	1045-1146	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1156-1215	One C-160 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1505-1540	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1710-1728	One C-160 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
18 April 2014	1420-1445	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
21 April 2014	1610-1640	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
24 April 2014	1710-1918	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
25 April 2014	1456-1515	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1534-1550	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
28 April 2014	1024-1132	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1215-1241	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1319-1334	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1351-1434	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1426-1552	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1558-1617	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1648-1708	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
29 April 2014	0934-1147	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from and again landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	0940-1030	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from and again landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1210-1249	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from and again landing at the illegal Tympou airport.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1410-1530	One Cougar Turkish military helicopter infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1620-1825	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations by entering the Nicosia FIR without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
30 April 2014	0837-1044	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from and again landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1226-1255	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
	1245-1303	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.
	1502-1522	Two F-4 and six F-16 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC.
	1725-1744	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, landing at the illegal Tympou airport.
	1757-1811	One CN-235 Turkish military aircraft infringed international air traffic regulations and violated the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by entering the Nicosia FIR and the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus without diplomatic permit or contacting Nicosia ACC, having departed from the illegal Tympou airport.

Annex II to the letter dated 15 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Naval violations

Dates	*Nature of violation*
2-3 April 2014	One P-349 Turkish missile boat violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Ammochostos, while participating in naval exercises of the occupation forces.
4-5 April 2014	One F-505 Turkish corvette violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Ammochostos, while participating in naval exercises of the occupation forces.
8-9 April 2014	One A-1600 Turkish military transport ferry violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Ammochostos.
10-11 April 2014	One P-348 Turkish missile boat violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Ammochostos, while participating in naval exercises of the occupation forces.
11-13 April 2014	One F-497 Turkish frigate violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Ammochostos, while participating in naval exercises of the occupation forces.
14-17 April 2014	One P-1204 Turkish patrol boat violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Kerynia, while participating in naval exercises of the occupation forces.
15-21 April 2014	One S-349 Turkish submarine violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Kerynia, while participating in naval exercises of the occupation forces.
25-27 April 2014	One F-496 Turkish frigate violated the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus and illegally used the closed port of Ammochostos, while participating in naval exercises of the occupation forces.

United Nations A/68/882

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 May 2014

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 110
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 2 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

In reference to your letters dated 14 January 2014 and 1 May 2014, regarding the fourth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the appointment of the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations as facilitator, I would like to express Syria's strong rejection of that appointment.

Throughout the three years of the Syrian crisis, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has drawn the attention of United Nations officials and organs to the destructive role the Turkish Government plays by fuelling the crisis in Syria. We explained, through hundreds of identical letters, the Turkish violations of international law, provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and international and regional instruments on counter-terrorism, including the United Nations Global Strategy itself.

The Turkish Government is a major supporter of terrorism. It has been coordinating, receiving, funding, arming and hosting tens of thousands of terrorists associated with Al-Qaida and its affiliates and other *takfiri* terrorist groups. It has also facilitated their entry into Syrian territory and provided them with rear bases on its own territory. When the Turkish regime's agenda in Syria failed, the Turkish army, acting on instructions from the Head of the Turkish Government, embarked on a blatant campaign of aggression against Syria. Turkish army tanks and artillery participated directly, with the terrorist group Al-Nusra Front, in the attack against the city of Kassab and the surrounding area.

The Turkish Government's clear and well-known support of terrorism is a manifestation of the threats "Erdoğan"'s Government poses to peace and security in the region, Europe and the world.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

14-53655 (E) 210514

Please recycle

United Nations A/68/883

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 May 2014

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda items 42 and 76

Question of Cyprus

Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 19 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to the letter dated 25 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/68/857) and to the note verbale from the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations dated 10 April 2014.

Turkey should first be reminded that the documents referred to in the letter of 25 April 2014, namely documents dated 17 October 2013 (A/68/537-S/2013/622), 29 October 2013 (A/68/555-S/2013/634), 12 November 2013 (A/68/593-S/2013/662), 5 December 2013 (A/68/644-S/2013/720) and 13 February 2014 (A/68/759), were sent to the Secretary-General by the undersigned Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cyprus to the United Nations. Cyprus is 1 of the 193 States Members of the United Nations and 1 of the 166 States parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Through that letter, Turkey claims, by reference also to previous communications, that the maritime areas that are west of longitude 32°16′18″E fall allegedly within its "continental shelf". Cyprus did reject the unfounded claims contained in those communications with a letter to the Secretary-General dated 15 June 2012 (A/66/851), as well as with a note verbale dated 28 December 2004, published in the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*, No. 57. In the same context, Cyprus reiterates its position that Turkey's claim over the said areas disregards completely the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf of the Republic of Cyprus. The rights to such maritime zones, including the sovereign rights and jurisdiction attached thereto, emanate from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which enjoys near-universal participation and reflects the relevant customary international law. Turkey's claim over the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf of the Republic of Cyprus west of longitude 32°16′18″E has no basis whatsoever in the Convention or customary international law.

14-53769 (E) 280514

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With regard to the remainder of the letter, it is recalled that the Security Council, through resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984), deplored the purported secession of part of the Republic of Cyprus and considered the declaration of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" as legally invalid, while calling upon all States not to facilitate or in any way assist that secessionist entity. It follows that any "agreements" with this illegal entity are also legally invalid ab initio. In this particular case, the "delimitation agreement" referred to by Turkey in its letter, as well as in its note verbale of 10 April 2014, is completely null and void and stands in flagrant violation of international law. Moreover, the coordinates listed in those communications as defining the alleged limits of Turkey's continental shelf in the maritime area between the north coast of the Republic of Cyprus and the south coast of the Republic of Turkey have no validity whatsoever under international law or the Convention. Cyprus recalls that the Convention provides that the delimitation of the exclusive economic zone/the continental shelf between States with opposite or adjacent coasts shall be effected by agreement on the basis of international law. No such agreement has been concluded so far between the Republic of Cyprus and the Republic of Turkey.

Turkey's brazen circulation of this lamentable document constitutes yet another example of a diatribe in lawlessness and contempt for the international legal order, manifesting that country's cynical attitude. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus will not tire of reminding Turkey that *allegans suam turpitudinem non est audiendus*.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 42 and 76, and have it published in the next *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.

(*Signed*) Nicholas **Emiliou**
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/68/884–S/2014/361

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
21 May 2014

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 35
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Letter dated 19 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter I sent today to all United Nations Member States and Observers together with the Governments of Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Chile, the Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, the Marshall Islands, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Samoa, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uruguay* (see annex I).

The said letter calls upon all United Nations Member States to co-sponsor the French draft Security Council resolution referring the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011 to the International Criminal Court.

Since we believe that this letter is of interest to all States Members of the United Nations, we would like to request its circulation as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 35, and of the Security Council, in connection with the item "The situation in the Middle East".

(*Signed*) Paul **Seger**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* Clarification on the part of Switzerland, on the basis of clarification received from the Mission of Uruguay: While Uruguay strongly supports a referral, it will be unable to co-sponsor the draft resolution and therefore prefers not to associate itself with the call for co-sponsorship.

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Annexes to the letter dated 19 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Annex I

To all United Nations Member States and Observers: Call for co-sponsorship of the French draft Security Council resolution (attached) referring the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to the International Criminal Court

I am writing to you on behalf of the following 58 States: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Chile, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Samoa, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay,* and my own country, Switzerland.

You may recall that, on 14 January 2013, the same group of 58 States sent a letter to the President of the Security Council (S/2013/19) expressing our firm view that the Council must ensure accountability for the crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. We asked that the Security Council act "by referring the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic as of March 2011 to the International Criminal Court without exceptions and irrespective of the alleged perpetrators".

Since then, the conflict has only grown in intensity and scope. More than 150,000 are estimated to have died, many of them civilians. Over 2.7 million have fled the country as refugees, and more than 6.5 million are internally displaced. Abuses and violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law continue on a daily basis and in a pervasive climate of impunity; many have been documented. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, has repeatedly called for a referral, and so has the Independent Commission of Inquiry mandated by the Human Rights Council.

Over one year after the collective call of the 58 States and on the basis of an initiative by France, Council members will this Thursday take action on a draft resolution (see annex II) that would refer the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to the International Criminal Court. France has indicated that it will open the resolution for co-sponsorship to the wider United Nations membership. To co-sponsor the resolution, delegations need to submit a rule 37 request to the Security Council Affairs Division. A copy of the signed letter (sample attached; see annex III) can be sent to dpa-scb3@un.org or faxed to 1-917-367-0406.

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* Clarification on the part of Switzerland, on the basis of clarification received from the Mission of Uruguay: While Uruguay strongly supports a referral, it will be unable to co-sponsor the draft resolution and therefore prefers not to associate itself with the call for co-sponsorship.

While several members of the group would prefer a stronger language regarding the terms of the referral and the support of the Organization, we all share the view that the initiative by France represents the best opportunity to bring at last, three years into the Syrian civil war, the promise of accountability to its war-ravaged people and at the same time to help to deter further atrocities. Each side of the conflict would be held accountable. According to the draft resolution, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court would be empowered to investigate crimes committed by the Syrian authorities and pro-government militias, as well as by non-State armed groups, all committed in the course of the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

Against this background, the 58 States strongly support the French initiative. We call upon the Security Council to adopt the draft resolution and we encourage United Nations Member States, States parties to the Rome Statute or not, to send a strong message of political support by co-sponsoring the resolution. The United Nations — the Security Council and the wider membership alike — should be united in acting for justice and accountability for the victims of the conflict in Syria.

I thank you in advance for your attention and your expression of support.

(*Signed*) Paul **Seger**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex II

France and Lithuania: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2042 (2012), 2043 (2012), 2118 (2013) and 2139 (2014), and its Presidential Statements of 3 August 2011, 21 March 2012, 5 April 2012 and 2 October 2013,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic, and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling its full endorsement of the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012 which states that accountability for acts committed during the present conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic must be addressed,

Taking note of the reports of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, mandated by the Human Rights Council to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law since March 2011 in the Syrian Arab Republic, to establish the facts and circumstances that may amount to such violations and of the crimes perpetrated and, where possible, to identify those responsible with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of violations, including those that may constitute crimes against humanity, are held accountable,

Recalling the statements made by the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that crimes against humanity and war crimes are likely to have been committed in the Syrian Arab Republic,

Noting the repeated encouragement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the Security Council to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court,

Determining that the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic constitutes a threat to international peace and security,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Reaffirms* its strong condemnation of the widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Syrian authorities and pro-government militias, as well as the human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law by non-State armed groups, all committed in the course of the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011;

2. *Decides* to refer the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic described in paragraph 1 above since March 2011 to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court;

3. *Decides also* that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic shall cooperate fully with and provide any necessary assistance to the Court and the Prosecutor, including by implementing fully the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court, pursuant to this resolution and, while recognizing that States not party to the Rome Statute have no obligation under the Statute, strongly urges all States and concerned regional and other international organizations to cooperate fully with the Court and the Prosecutor;

4. *Demands* that non-State armed groups in the Syrian Arab Republic also cooperate fully with and provide any necessary assistance to the Court and the Prosecutor in connection with investigations and prosecutions undertaken pursuant to this resolution;

5. *Expresses its commitment* to an effective follow-up of the present resolution;

6. *Recalls* the guidance issued by the Secretary-General on contacts with persons who are the subject of arrest warrants or summonses issued by the International Criminal Court;

7. *Decides* that nationals, current or former officials or personnel from a State outside the Syrian Arab Republic which is not a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of that State for all alleged acts or omissions arising out of or related to operations in the Syrian Arab Republic established or authorized by the Council, unless such exclusive jurisdiction has been expressly waived by the State;

8. *Recognizes* that none of the expenses incurred in connection with the referral, including expenses related to investigations or prosecutions in connection with that referral, shall be borne by the United Nations and that such costs shall be borne by the parties to the Rome Statute and those States that wish to contribute voluntarily and *encourages* States to make such contributions, noting the need for funding of expenses related to investigations or prosecutions of the International Criminal Court, including in connection with situations referred to the Court by the Security Council, as stated in General Assembly resolution 67/295;

9. *Invites* the Prosecutor to address the Council within two months of the date of adoption of this resolution and every six months thereafter on actions taken pursuant to this resolution and requests the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Prosecutor as a document of the Council, in advance of such briefings;

10. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

Annex III

___ May 2014

Excellency,

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request that my delegation be allowed to participate without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, in the Council's meeting on ___ May 2014, in connection with the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East", in order to co-sponsor the draft resolution to be voted upon at that meeting.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sign _____

Print name _____

Permanent Mission of _____
to the United Nations

His Excellency
Mr. Oh Joon
President of the Security Council
United Nations
Fax: 917-367-0406
E-mail: dpa-scsb3@un.org

United Nations A/68/885–S/2014/359

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
21 May 2014
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 35
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 19 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I wish to transmit the following information:

- At 1130 hours on 1 May 2014, an Israeli enemy patrol comprising two Hummer vehicles and a Defender vehicle approached opposite the Abbadin position at points B71-2 and B72, near the town of Hawla. Seven members stepped out, opened the gate in the technical fence and crossed the Blue Line at the point having the coordinates Q:736701-N:3676770, entering Lebanese territory by some 20 metres. At 1150 hours, they returned into occupied territory.

- At 1240 hours on 9 May 2014, in the locality of Shahl on the outskirts of Shab'a town, a 15-person Israeli enemy patrol crossed some 50 metres into the area to which Lebanon maintains a claim. They attempted to abduct the civilians Isma'il Qasim Zahrah, Muhammad Husayn Zahrah and Isma'il Husayn Zahrah, who fled, and seized their herd of some 100 head of goats. At 1320 hours, the patrol withdrew into occupied territory, releasing the goats.

- At 1055 hours on 11 May 2014, while the Israeli enemy was clearing grass between points M1 (to which Lebanon maintains a claim) and M2, opposite Ra's al-Naqurah, one of the engineering machines extended its boom over the technical fence into Lebanese territory, where it removed some grass. At 1200 hours, the same machine uprooted a tree on Lebanese territory and damaged another. In so doing, it removed the camouflage from a Lebanese Army fortification some 100 metres west of point M2(2). The machine also moved two cement blocks from within Lebanese territory, placing them south of the technical fence. Enemy forces stopped work at 1400 hours and resumed it at 1500 hours between points M2(2) and B3, north of the technical fence. Work continued until 1630 hours.

14-53824 (E) 220514 290514

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– Between 1600 hours and 1635 hours on 12 May 2014, while the Israeli enemy was carrying out digging work next to the technical fence 25 metres east of point B4, opposite Naqurah, debris was shovelled north of the Blue Line into Lebanese territory.

– Between 1000 hours and 1100 hours on 12 May 2014, some 200 metres from the Lebanese coast off Ra's al-Naqurah, three Israeli enemy launches released two divers, who installed a new yellow conical buoy 25 metres from the existing row of buoys positioned by the Israeli enemy. In so doing, they committed a violation by penetrating 25 metres into Lebanese waters, as well as by installing the buoys. The divers then left on a launch into occupied Palestinian territorial waters. At 1145 hours, two Israeli launches proceeding from within occupied Palestinian waters removed the old buoy No. 1.

Those actions are a clear violation of my country's sovereignty and of the relevant international resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). They also clearly contravene the Charter of the United Nations and the principles and provisions of international law. I reiterate my Government's commitment to its obligations under international resolutions and, on behalf of my Government, call on the Security Council to condemn those violations in the strongest possible terms and prevail on Israel to end its violations of Lebanese sovereignty, whether in the air, at sea or on land, and implement all of its obligations under Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 35, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/68/886

General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 May 2014

Original: English

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 66
Rights of indigenous peoples

Letter dated 21 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement by the Government of Ukraine dated 16 April 2014 on its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 66.

(*Signed*) Yuriy **Sergeyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

14-53828 (E) 280514

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Annex to the letter dated 21 May 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Government of Ukraine on its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Ukraine is a multinational and multicultural unitary State.

Under the Constitution, the State promotes the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, its historical consciousness, traditions and culture, as well as the development of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of all indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine.

The Constitution of Ukraine, the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine and a number of legislative acts have already established and guaranteed adequate conditions for the sterling development of Ukraine's citizens of different nationalities. Ukraine has a modern political, legal and socioeconomic system harmonized with international standards, which enables the full self-realization of the human rights and freedoms of Ukraine's citizens of indigenous and ethnic minority origin.

Ukraine recognizes the need to further the harmonious development of national ethnic policy and improvement of national legislation on the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples to participate in the political, economic, social and cultural life of Ukraine.

Recognizing the role of indigenous peoples in the development and establishment of Ukraine as an independent State, enriching its culture and history, Ukraine declares its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

By supporting the Declaration, Ukraine confirms its policy aimed at preserving and developing the Ukrainian nation, the entire diversity of ethnic groups and peoples, which is the key to the peaceful and harmonious development of our country.

United Nations A/68/887

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 May 2014
English
Original: Chinese

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 76 (a)
Oceans and the law of the sea

Letter dated 22 May 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith China's position paper regarding the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam's illegal disruption of the normal drilling operation by a Chinese company in the waters off China's Xisha Islands (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 76 (a).

(*Signed*) **Wang** Min
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Acting Permanent Representative
of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations

14-54095 (E) 280514

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Annex to the letter dated 22 May 2014 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Position paper

1. On 2 May 2014, shortly after a Chinese company's HYSY 981 drilling rig started an oil and gas drilling operation in the waters close to China's Xisha Islands, Viet Nam attempted to disrupt the drilling operation by sending vessels to deliberately and forcefully ram into Chinese Coast Guard vessels that were on the site for escort and security missions. After the incident, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China sent a note to the Vietnamese Embassy in China, asking the latter to notify its capital of a prior navigation notice issued by China's maritime authorities and urging Viet Nam to follow international practices by taking note of and respecting this notice so as to maintain proper order for maritime production activities and navigation safety. Nevertheless, the number of Vietnamese vessels only increased, and collisions against Chinese vessels on the site became fiercer. Figures collected as at 22 May indicated that, at one point, as many as 63 Vietnamese vessels of various types were at the scene, including many armed vessels, and that there were 745 collisions against Chinese government vessels. While such collisions were taking place, Viet Nam also dispatched frogmen and other underwater agents and laid large obstacles, including fishing nets and floating objects, in the waters. Furthermore, Viet Nam has been making unfounded comments to other countries, slandering and attacking China on this matter. Meanwhile, some outlaws in Viet Nam took the opportunity to attack Chinese companies in the country and committed serious violent crimes of beating, smashing, looting and burning, causing heavy casualties and property loss.

2. The Xisha Islands are an integral part of China's territory and are under China's effective jurisdiction. There exists no dispute over the Xisha Islands. The area where the HYSY 981 rig operates is 17 nautical miles from Zhongjian Island of the Xisha Islands and nearly 150 nautical miles from the coast of Viet Nam. The relevant operation falls well within China's sovereignty and jurisdiction. As a matter of fact, the Chinese company has for years conducted oil and gas activities in the related waters, including two-dimensional and three-dimensional seismic operations. The drilling operation carried out this time is simply a continuation of the routine oil and gas activities. China is deeply shocked by Viet Nam's violent disruption of the normal operation of the Chinese company and is firmly opposed to such acts by Viet Nam.

3. Viet Nam's violent disruption of the normal operation of the Chinese company constitutes a gross violation of China's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction. It endangers the normal order of production and operation at sea, threatens the safety of the Chinese rig, ships, facilities and personnel, and negatively affects peace and stability in the region as well as safety of navigation in the relevant waters. China has, through diplomatic channels, repeatedly urged Viet Nam to respect China's sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction, immediately cease the disruption in whatever form and withdraw Vietnamese ships from the operation site. Since Viet Nam has refused to heed China's advice and continued to disrupt the relevant operation, China has no choice but to step up safety and security on the site and take necessary measures in reaction to the ramming and harassing activities of

Viet Nam. China urges Viet Nam to immediately cease all actions violating China's sovereignty and undermining proper order at sea, and take resolute and effective measures to stop all violent crimes, bring those accountable to justice and ensure the safety of Chinese citizens and institutions in Viet Nam.

4. China has maintained contact with Viet Nam since the incident took place, and the two countries have had smooth channels of communication. The current situation is caused completely by Viet Nam's illegal disruption of the normal operation by the Chinese company. Despite all this, China has kept in mind the larger interests of bilateral relations and peace and stability in the South China Sea, and will maintain communication with Viet Nam.